

• SOUND • LIGHTING • VIDEO • PERFORMANCE • MUSIC • BUSINESS •

# Mobile Beat

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE • WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

ISSUE 150 JULY 2013

WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

## Talking Tech

Essential DJ Tech Skills  
Is DMX Worth It?  
Back That Thing Up!  
Thinking About Upgrades



DETAILS ON  
PAGE 22

### REVIEWS

**TRUSST® Arch Kit**  
**Electro-Voice ZLX-12P**  
**Powered Speaker**

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The Power of Goals

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Fun with Multiple  
Song Versions

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**PX1500X & P1800SX**  
**Powered Speakers**

**Yamaha STAGEPAS 600i**  
**Portable PA**

**DPA d:fine**  
**Dual-Ear Headset Mic**

**TriceraSoft**  
**Karaoke Suite**





**Pioneer DJ**

**XDJ-AERO**  
rekordbox

# MIX LONG & PROSPER

The XDJ-AERO is the industry's first Wi-Fi® DJ system that can wirelessly obtain music tracks from smart devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers. The XDJ-AERO enables users to mix and arrange their favorite music tracks stored on their smart devices via Wi-Fi Direct with the use of the rekordbox™ app. The rekordbox™ app is available at the App Store<sup>SM</sup> and Google Play™ Store (at no cost). DJs can also play music tracks on USB memory devices and computers via included rekordbox™ DJ Music Management software. The advanced technology featured in our XDJ-AERO allows anyone [or any thing] to Mix Long & Prosper.

## XDJ-AERO WIRELESS DJ SYSTEM

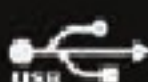
- ✦ Industry's first DJ system using smartphones and tablets via Wi-Fi Direct
- ✦ USB port located on top of the unit enables users to quickly connect an external storage device for easy access to music files
- ✦ Can be used as an independent 2-channel mixer
- ✦ Wide range of onboard effects including jog drum, Sample Launch, and more
- ✦ Two automatic mixing functions
- ✦ Record your mix directly to a USB storage device
- ✦ Slim and stylish design

Available on the  
App Store



**rekordbox**

WiFi  
CERTIFIED



MIDI

smart devices not included



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# Add Some **Bling** to Your Show!



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**UHF-DIAMOND**



8 colors to choose from, compatible with UHF-5800 and UHF-8800 (Hand-held mic only)

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# Talking Tech



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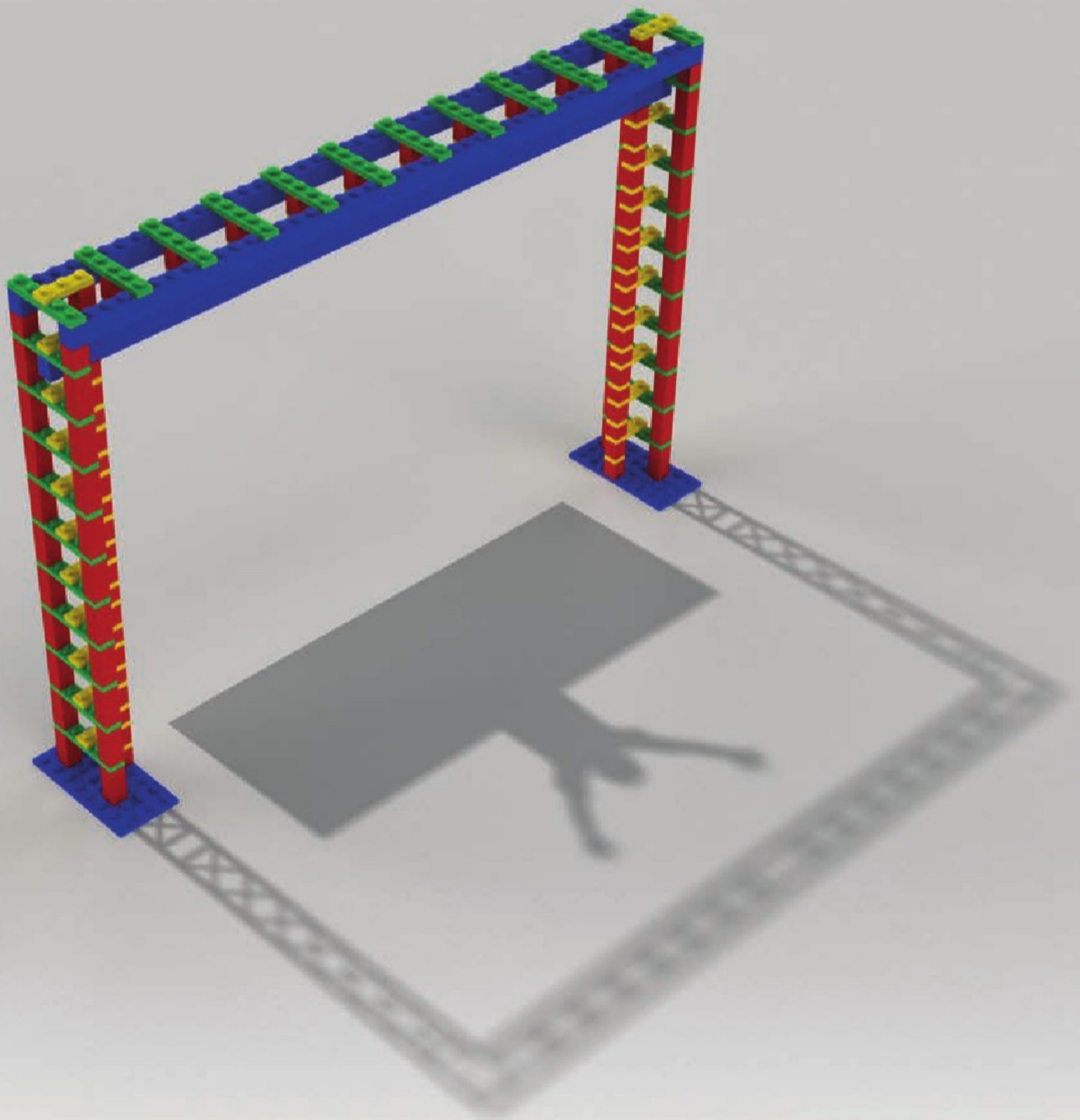
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*Cover photo by Monica Offermann*



Easy then. Easy now.



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[www.TRUSST.com](http://www.TRUSST.com)

See us at DJ Expo | Booth 712

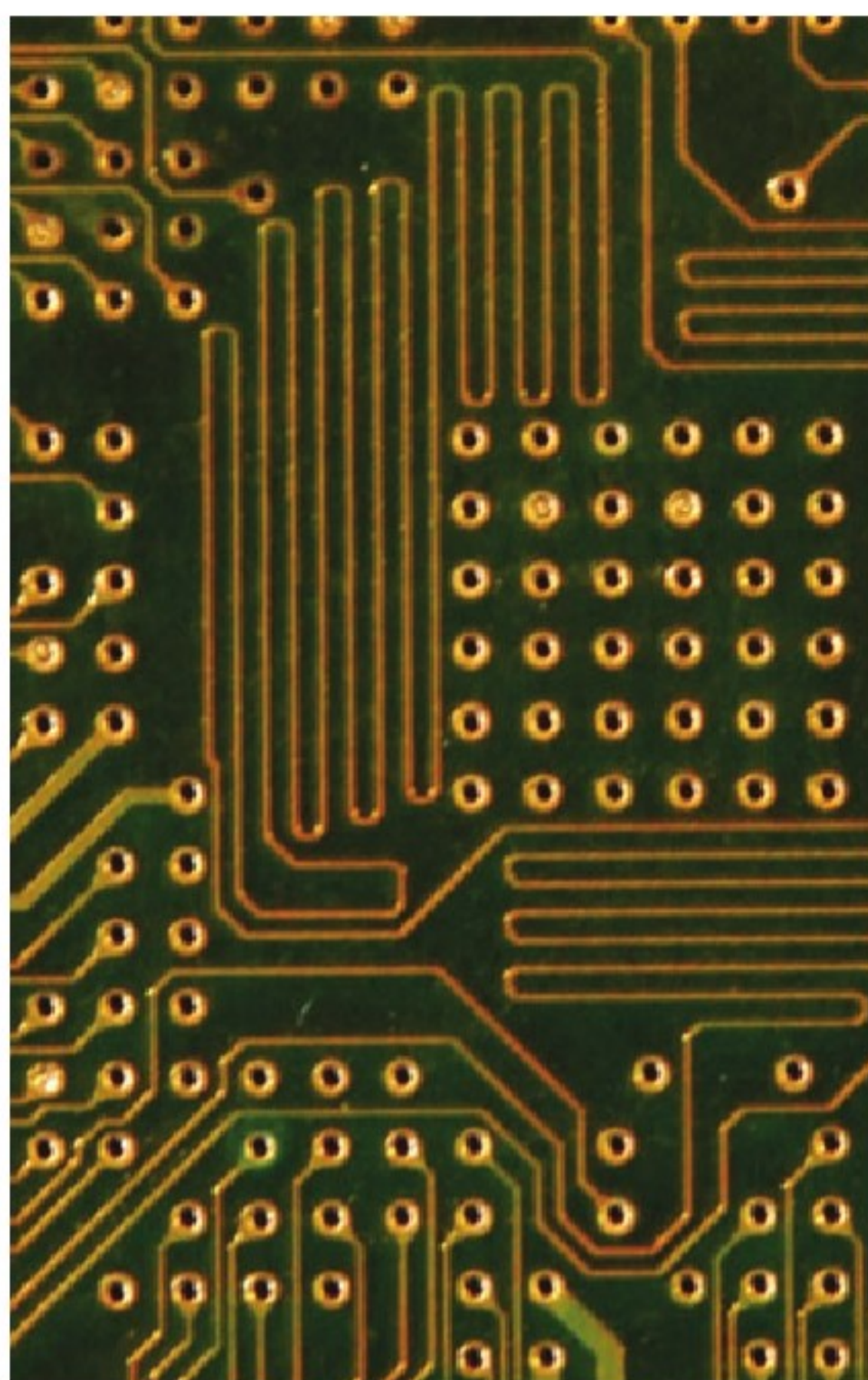
**TRUSST**   
Backed by Chauvet



For many, if not most DJs, talking tech is a favorite pastime. Comparing rigs, recommending or warning about different gear, touting this or that awesome new software package, asking advice on how to troubleshoot some irksome issue. And so on.

In that spirit, this issue is dedicated in large part to discussions of gear and technology, from a variety of perspectives. Jim Papa shares a personal story to illustrate the importance of research before committing cold cash to an equipment purchase. Stu Chisholm also gets personal with some reflections on past technology and counsels us to beware claims of unlimited gear life spans. Also in the category of "watching your back," Rich McCoy covers some basics of setting up a back-up system.

In a hard-hitting feature piece, Arnoldo Offermann points out the logic of learning your technology in and out—not only your DJ hardware and software, but everything that supports what you do. In an another article he also gives



some advice for navigating the sometimes mysterious realm of DMX.

Along with the general tech talk, we offer a bigger-than-normal selection of gear

goodies to salivate over, with reviews of the following: the TRUSST® Arch Kit, TriceraSoft Karaoke Suite, Yamaha STAGEPAS 600i Portable PA, Cerwin-Vega! P1500X Powered Speaker and P1800SX Powered Subwoofer, Electro-Voice ZLX-12P Powered Speaker, and the DPA d:fine Headset Mic.

And highlighting our gear focus, we're rolling out a fun new opportunity for YOU to interact with the Mobile Beat online community and talk tech...check out page 22 to find out how.

On the topic of mastering the most current tools of the trade, Jim Weisz lists some extremely useful apps to help you take care of business, and Stephanie Padovani talks about how *not* to blog for brides. John Stiernberg provides some solid advice on combining the technology of business with the human element.

Which is a good reminder that all the technology we utilize is meant to help us connect with the audience better, and produce the most exciting show, more efficiently, but without the human touch, all our DJ gear is like the Tin Man in search of a beating heart.

- Dan Walsh, Editor-in-Chief

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# SIMPLE SETUP. SERIOUS BASS.

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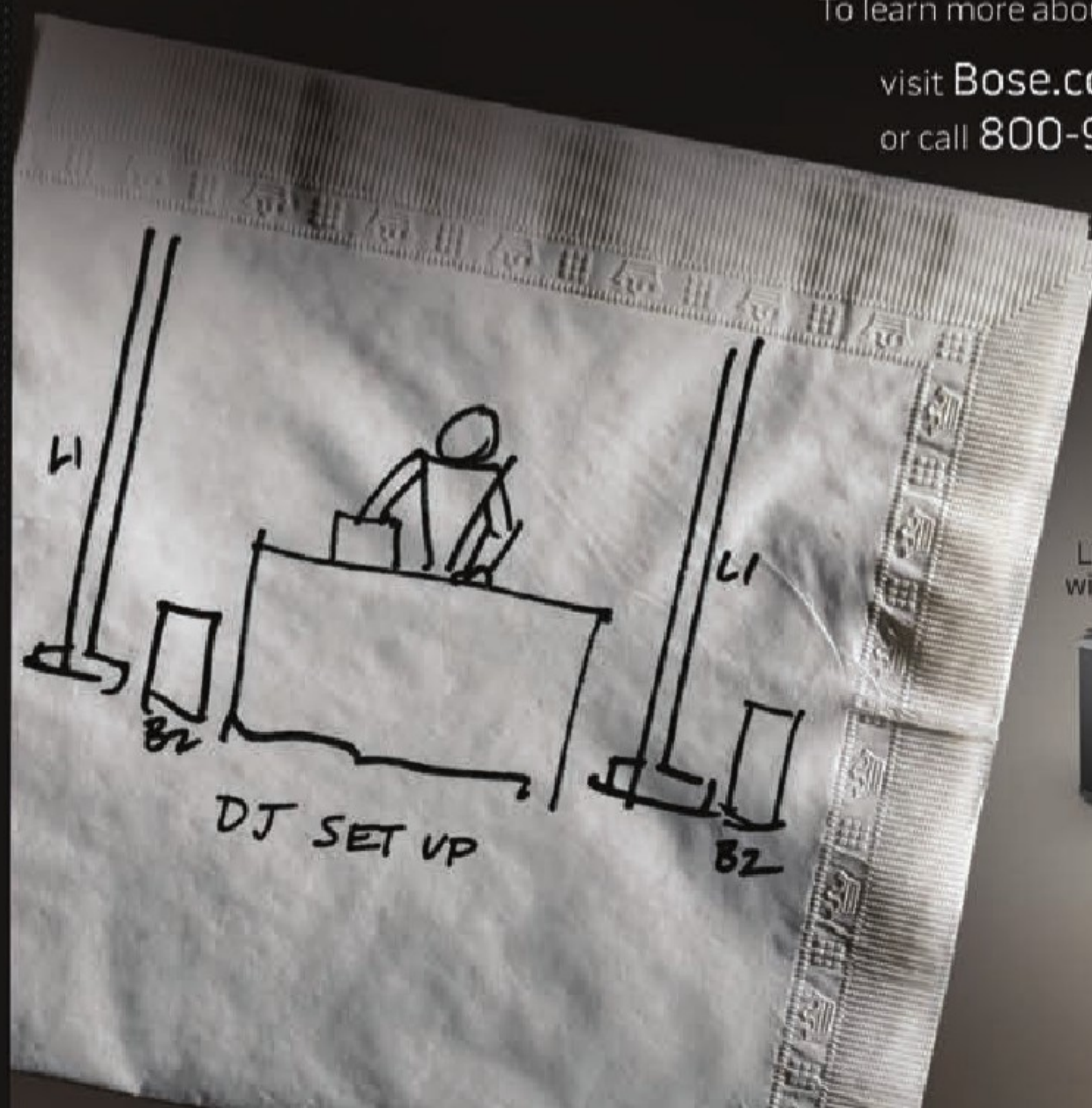
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or call 800-905-1979

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DJ SET UP

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with B2 bass



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# AKG-By-Tiësto Headphones Earn Coveted Red Dot

Introduced in 2012, Harman's AKG-by-Tiësto headphones have taken the DJ market by storm. The collaboration between AKG and world-famous DJ and producer brought the popular artist into the design stages of the headphones to specifically map out his perfect piece for



heavy-duty performance. With the artist's input and stamp of approval, the full line of Tiësto headphones recently earned the internationally acclaimed Red Dot label recognition for product design in 2013.

The Red Dot symbol is awarded to

the finest in technology, products from companies that accentuate excellent design and long-term quality.

"The Red Dot recognition for our best-selling AKG-by-Tiësto headphones underscores the decades of quality and reliability producers, DJs and music enthusiasts expect from our legendary products," said Thomas Stubics, Product Marketing Manager for AKG. "Red Dot is synonymous with leading products in numerous industries and to have the AKG-by-Tiësto headphones marked with its symbol validates our position that our world-class, multi-purpose headphones provide an all-encompassing quality for the music industry."

K267 TIËSTO offers an over-ear, closed-back design, with an oversized low resonance driver, providing a higher SPL, while still maintaining a matched low frequency bass response. Its user-adjustable bass boost keeps sound neutral or maximizes deeper sub-bass frequencies when prompted. With high-quality materials and superior workmanship, K267's sound quality raises the bar for the professional DJ with the best perfor-

mance without compromise. K267's Dual Plug-In feature allows the user to attach the cable to either side for maximum comfort. In addition, each set boasts 3D-Axis folding mechanisms for optimum fitting and flat storage.

K167 TIËSTO is an over-ear, closed-back design for high comfort and maximum noise rejection. Suitable for multiple applications, from the stage to the studio, DJs and music enthusiasts will enjoy the stunning design and impressive sound quality, even in loud environments. Its 40mm driver allows for higher sound pressure levels, while its roadworthy design provides maximum reliability.

K67 TIËSTO's on-ear design is ideal for the perfect sound on the go. They are designed for a wide range of applications from live sound to studio work. The compact design delivers convincing and powerful sound wherever necessary, even outdoors.

For more information about AKG, go to [www.akg.com](http://www.akg.com) and for more on the redden design award, check out [en.red-dot.org](http://en.red-dot.org).



## DJ UNIVERSITY

What's New on DJU...

[www.mobilebeat.com/dj-university](http://www.mobilebeat.com/dj-university)

### Video: Let There Be...Karaoke Light!

By Geoff Short



### All the Time in the World (re: setup time)

By Geoff Short



### Starting Your DMX Experience (12th in a Series)

By Tyrone Blue







## LIGHT COLUMNS™


\* PATENT PENDING

Odyssey's Scrim Werks™ Light Columns create dramatic lighting effects using portable aluminum frames and scrim sleeves, ranging in height from 1ft to 10ft tall. Odyssey's patent-pending columns are sturdy, lightweight and cost-effective alternative solutions to traditional square truss setups. Designed with portability in mind, the columns easily setup within minutes and ship in a flat and compact footprint. Each column design consists of 4 individual aluminum tubes, top and bottom plates, and a corresponding scrim sleeve

### Features:

- Fully Collapsible for Convenient Compact Storage and Transport
- Center Bolt Hole on Plates to Secure Lighting Fixtures or Other Gear
- Scalable Sizing with the Ability to Attach on Top of One Another
- Ships Flat for a Highly Portable Solution
- Easy Set Up and Tear Down Design
- Adjustable to various different positions
- Includes White Column Scrim
- Durable Stretch Material
- Flame Retardant Treated
- Machine Washable



Odyssey Innovative Designs is also known as ODY-USA.  **ODYUSA** /Odyssey is an industry-leading designer and manufacturer of professional mobile accessory solutions for the DJ, musical instruments, and pro audiomarkets. Founded in 1995, Odyssey has brought to market hundreds of unique products and continues to lead the industry with innovative patented products. With numerous technology and design awards, Odyssey has established a worldwide reputation for innovation, quality and design. The Odyssey group of companies includes Show Solutions and BC Cases.

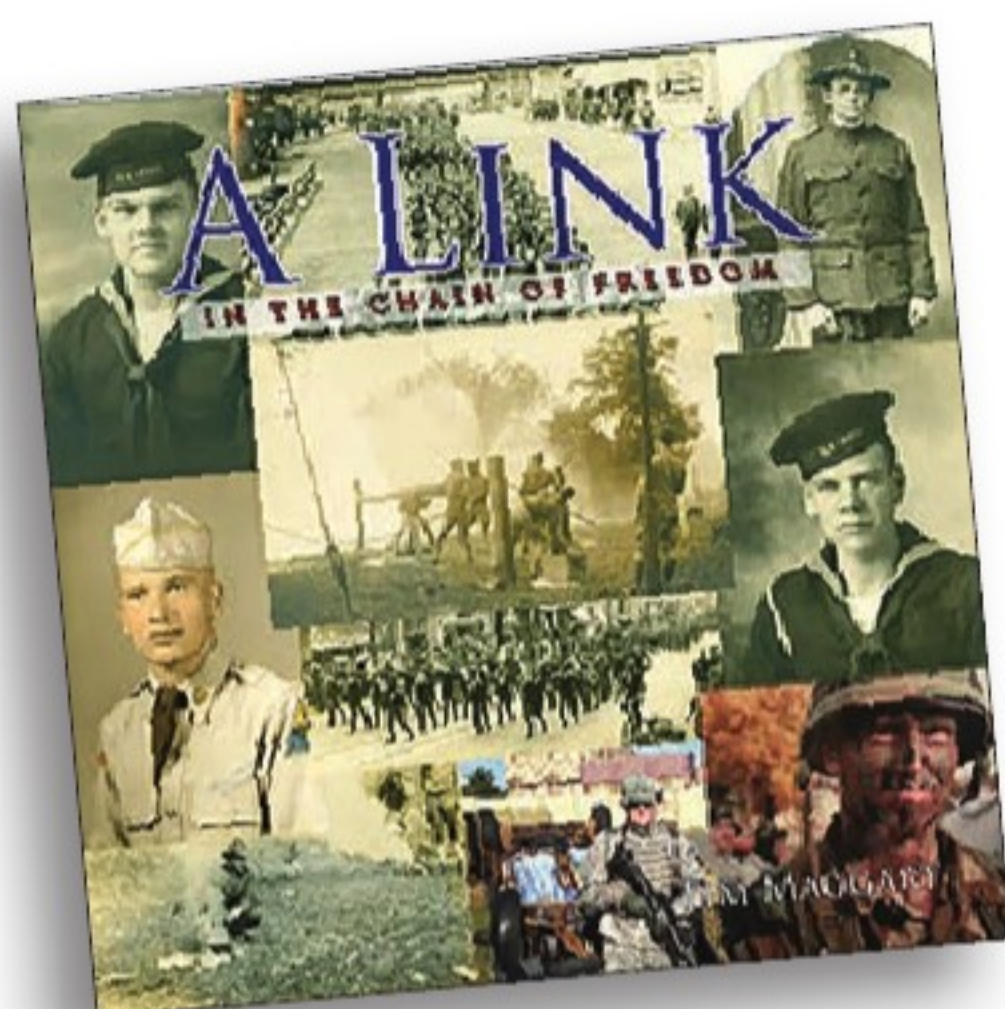




## Country Song Celebrates Heroes

The combined musical talents of a New York lawyer and an award-winning songwriter from Phenix City, Ala., have hit a patriotic high note. Country recording artist Tim Maggart teamed up with Jonathan D'Agostino, an attorney based in the Staten Island, New York, to pen "A Link" in tribute to America's military heroes.

D'Agostino, who handles accident cases for a living, has earned one or more top 10 finalist spots over the past three consecutive years in the International Song of the Year Contest produced by Country Music Television and the Nashville Songwriters Association.



"The idea for 'A Link' started when I read Tim's Facebook post about how proud he was that his son was going to follow in the footsteps of him and his dad," D'Agostino said. "I immediately thought of the word 'link,' and told Tim we need to write this song."

Tim Maggart, whose 2011 collection *Things I Never Said* was voted Country Album of the Year by the North American Country Music Association, is also

U.S. Army veteran. Members of his family have proudly served the nation in every conflict since the Civil War.

The music video for Maggart and D'Agostino's latest collaboration, filmed at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, Georgia. It is poignantly embroidered with military footage, scenes of returning soldiers reuniting with family members, and solemn resting places of heroes who gave the ultimate sacrifice. During the filming of "A Link," people holding photos of loved ones who have served in the military lined up in tribute along a visitors' path on the museum grounds.

"'A Link' pays tribute to the generations of Americans who fought for our nation, each *A Link in the Chain of Freedom*," Maggart said, also naming the album that will contain this inspiring song, along with a number of others, including "House of Heroes."

You can check out the song and album at [www.timmaggart.com/fr\\_home.cfm](http://www.timmaggart.com/fr_home.cfm).



## Innovative Wireless PA

The **LSP 500 PRO PA System** from **Sennheiser** is an innovative wireless loudspeaker with an accompanying app that can control up to 20 speakers remotely at the same time.

The LSP 500 PRO can take up to three receivers for wireless mics, and a combo 1.4"/XLR input for a wired mic. It is compatible with microphones from Sennheiser's evolution wireless 100, 300 and 500 series. The speaker also features a USB connector and a Bluetooth interface, as well as an AUX input and output. If more than one loudspeaker is being used, one of them can be defined as the master and then connected with other slaved speakers via a wireless link.



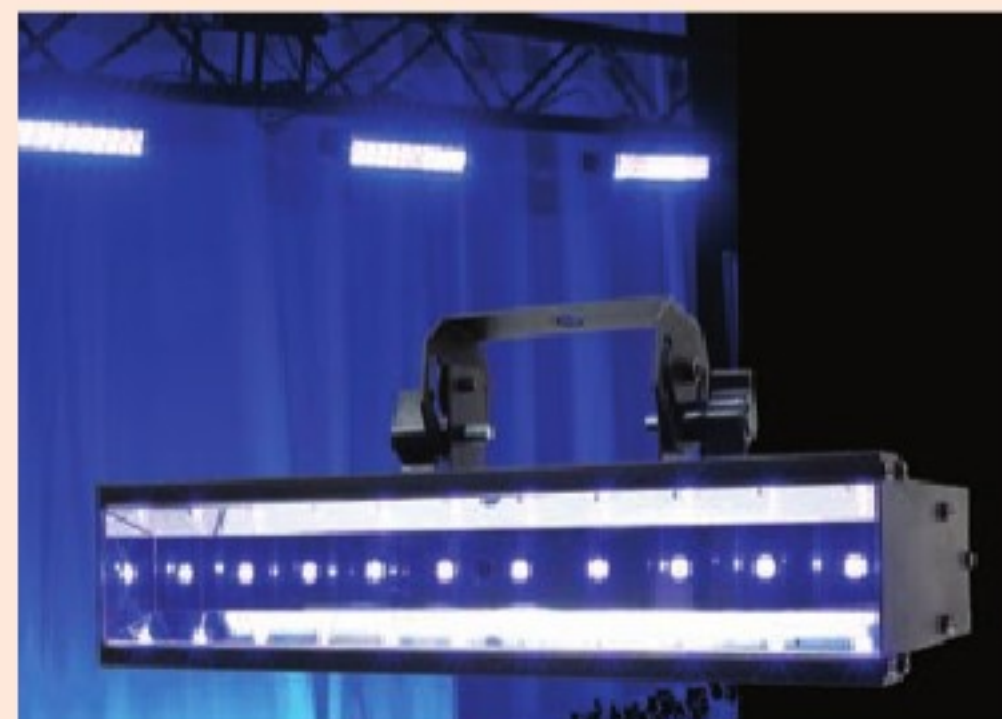
The unit has a built-in music player that enables music to be played directly from an external device via the USB connector or the Bluetooth interface. The music player also has a convenient recording function which allows audio input to be recorded directly on a USB device.

The LSP 500 PRO has room for two rechargeable batteries but uses only one of them to supply power at any time, ensuring a reliable operating of up to seven hours.

[www.sennheiserusa.com](http://www.sennheiserusa.com)

## UV Unplugged

ADJ's new **LED UV GO** is an **LED-powered ultraviolet bar** that can "go" just about anywhere, because it runs on its own internal lithium battery for up to 8 hrs. and doesn't require a power cord. Featuring a 10° vert. x 40° hor. linear beam angle, the LED UV GO is perfect for wall washing and uplighting. Its 10 x 1-watt UV LEDs produce an impressively bright ultraviolet wash, and users can add effects such as a variable Strobe and 0-100% Electronic Dimming.



No worries about suddenly running out of juice, as a battery life Indicator on the rear panel clearly displays the amount of battery charge that remains. The battery itself can be easily recharged up to full throttle in 6 hours (recharging cord is included).

The unit comes with an ADJ-RC1 infrared wireless remote controller that provides cordless command of its built-in functions, including strobing, dimming and blackout, from distances up to 30 feet away. These functions can also be accessed via a convenient 4-button LED display (non-DMX) on the unit's rear panel.

[www.adj.com](http://www.adj.com)





# Live X

## SOUND BETTER.

Designed for the most demanding live performances, the new Live X family of powered and passive PA loudspeakers sets new standards for portable sound. Everything Electro-Voice has learned making audio systems for the world's biggest events is built into Live X:

- Precision-engineered components for best-in-class performance
- Lightweight wood cabinets for ease-of-use and real-world durability
- Stackable or pole-mounted designs and integral monitor angles for maximum versatility

All at a price point previously unheard-of for loudspeakers of a similar pedigree.

### POWERED LOUDSPEAKERS

12 | 15 | 18

### PASSIVE LOUDSPEAKERS

12 | 15 | 2x15 | 18



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**\$50 off  
Powered Live X!**

\$50 instant rebate on powered Live X loudspeakers. July 1–July 31, 2013  
(available at participating retailers)



### CHECK OUT EVDJ

A new online resource for DJs  
Hosted by Bill Hermann & Jason Jones  
(The Entertainment Experience)  
[www.electrovoice.com/evdj](http://www.electrovoice.com/evdj)



THE ENTERTAINMENT  
EXPERIENCE®



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# Which is Better, One or Two?

OF EYE EXAMS AND SONG VERSIONS

By Jay Maxwell

**I**t was about a year ago when I did my own unofficial eye exam by placing my left hand over my left eye to see if my right eye was indeed blurry. It had been only a few months since I had changed prescriptions for my contacts, but I feared that my eyesight had greatly diminished in my right eye. My guess was that the prescription was not correct or perhaps the contact was not making a tight fit with my eye.

After making an appointment with my optometrist, I felt that with one visit he would determine the remedy of either a different type of lens or realize that the strength of the contact needed to be changed. He did the usual eye exam routine, first asking me which view, one or two, was better, and then he took a closer look with a bright light. It was then that I heard him say, "ummmm." It was not your usual "um", but one that had at least four m's in it. Whenever a doctor puts more than one "m" in his "um" you know that the news is going to be unpleasant.

In short order he rolled his chair back (another sign of impending bad news) and explained that he believed my poor

eyesight was due to a cataract in my eye and that he was going to send me to an ophthalmologist for a second opinion. So, just before Christmas I found myself sitting in the ophthalmologist's office waiting for his opinion about my eyesight. Always the optimist, I knew that he was going to give me a different diagnosis. Perhaps he knew of a different brand of lens or could simply give me some drops to clear up my vision. But my optimism was to no avail, as he clearly stated that cataracts were the reason my eyesight was failing and that only surgery would make it better.

## ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT IN NEED OF REPAIR

Since he said there was no rush, I took him at his word and waited until after my spring semester of teaching at the university to make the dreaded arrangements for surgery. Truth be known, I have such a fear of doctors that I did not actually make the appointment, but had my wife call to schedule it for me. We were both surprised when they asked which eye I wanted to have surgery on first. It turned out that even though my right eye was worse, my left eye needed to have surgery also. Before the first operation, there was the evaluation where I was able to choose whether I wanted laser surgery or the old school scalpel method,

## Tune One or Tune Two?

RANK	SONG TITLE	FIRST RECORDING ARTIST	SECOND RECORDING ARTIST
1	BROWN EYED GIRL	VAN MORRISON	JIMMY BUFFETT
2	HOW SWEET IT IS	MARVIN GAYE	JAMES TAYLOR
3	AT LAST	ETTA JAMES	BEYONCE
4	TWIST AND SHOUT	ISLEY BROTHERS	BEATLES
5	WAGON WHEEL	OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW	DARIUS RUCKER
6	SMOOTH CRIMINAL	MICHAEL JACKSON	ALIEN ANT FARM
7	I'M A BELIEVER	MONKEES	SMASH MOUTH
8	CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE	ELVIS PRESLEY	UB40
9	SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME	DRIFTERS	MICHAEL BUBLE
10	MUSTANG SALLY	WILSON PICKETT	COMMITMENTS
11	PROUD MARY	CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL	IKE & TINA TURNER
12	LIFE IS A HIGHWAY	TOM COCHRANE	RASCAL FLATTS
13	THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT	FRANK SINATRA	FATHER OF BRIDE SOUNDTRACK
14	OH, PRETTY WOMAN	ROY ORBISON	VAN HALEN
15	IT HAD TO BE YOU	FRANK SINATRA	HARRY CONNICK, JR.
16	BEST IS YET TO COME	FRANK SINATRA	MICHAEL BUBLE
17	CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU	FRANKIE VALLI	LAURYN HILL
18	DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT	KING HARVEST	TOPLOADER
19	GOD GAVE ME YOU	DAVE BARNES	BLAKE SHELTON
20	UNFORGETTABLE	NAT KING COLE	NAT KING COLE & NATALIE COLE
21	HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY	VAN MORRISON	ROD STEWART
22	SEXUAL HEALING	MARVIN GAYE	MAX-A-MILLIAN



They are tough, road ready  
and can actually sound  
better the louder they are  
pushed. Thats crazy!

Steve Hanke, Musicbox Entertainment

Customer Service took a  
personal interest in me.  
You can tell that they  
appreciate their customers.

Bobbi Paschall, Sing It! Karaoke

If I were ever to leave my  
QSC speakers that would  
be harder than breaking  
up with a girlfriend.

Rob Durkin, DJ Red IV

Why do more mobile  
entertainers choose  
QSC over any other  
professional brand?

**Ask them.**

It took a week to wipe  
the smile off my face.

John (Jack) Mills, Jack's DJ and Karaoke

Without my K12's  
I wouldn't be in business.

AJ Almanzor, DJ AJ Entertainment

I have gotten more jobs because  
of how good the sound is.

Michael Duffy, Burning Down the House Entertainment

Clarity, no distortion  
and the sound output  
is ridiculous!

Marquis Gabriel, DJ Mello

**QSC**

qsc.com



## PLAY SOMETHING WE CAN DANCE TO

RANK	SONG TITLE	FIRST RECORDING ARTIST	SECOND RECORDING ARTIST
23	WALK THIS WAY	<b>AEROSMITH</b>	RUN-D.M.C.
24	I LIKE TO MOVE IT	REEL 2 REAL	<b>WILL.I.AM</b>
25	GEORGIA ON MY MIND	<b>RAY CHARLES</b>	WILLIE NELSON
26	WHEN YOU SAY NOTHING AT ALL	<b>ALISON KRAUSS</b>	RONAN KEATING
27	WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN	<b>PERCY SLEDGE</b>	MICHAEL BOLTON
28	FUNKYTOWN	<b>LIPPS, INC.</b>	PSEUDO ECHO
29	(GOD MUST HAVE SPENT) A LITTLE MORE TIME ON YOU	<b>NSYNC</b>	ALABAMA
30	SOUL MAN	SAM & DAVE	<b>BLUES BROTHERS</b>
31	MONY MONY	<b>TOMMY JAMES</b>	BILLY IDOL
32	TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART	<b>BONNIE TYLER</b>	NICKI FRENCH
33	I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE	<b>MARVIN GAYE</b>	CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
34	SIMPLE MAN	<b>LYNYRD SKYNYRD</b>	SHINEDOWN
35	LADY MARMALADE	LABELLE	<b>CHRISTINA AGUILERA / LIL'KIM / PINK</b>
36	I'LL BE THERE	<b>JACKSON 5</b>	MARIAH CAREY
37	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	DOLLY PARTON	<b>WHITNEY HOUSTON</b>
38	KILLING ME SOFTLY WITH HIS SONG	ROBERTA FLACK	<b>FUGEES</b>
39	HEAVEN	BRYAN ADAMS	<b>DJ SAMMY &amp; YANOU</b>
40	I SWEAR	JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY	<b>ALL-4-ONE</b>
41	JUST THE TWO OF US	GROVER WASHINGTON JR. / BILL WITHERS	<b>WILL SMITH</b>
42	LEAN ON ME	<b>BILL WITHERS</b>	CLUB NOUVEAU
43	ALWAYS AND FOREVER	HEATWAVE	<b>LUTHER VANDROSS</b>
44	LA BAMBA	RITCHIE VALENS	<b>LOS LOBOS</b>
45	LOCO-MOTION	LITTLE EVA	<b>KYLIE MINOGUE</b>
46	LOVE ROLLERCOASTER	OHIO PLAYERS	<b>RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS</b>
47	I CAN LOVE YOU LIKE THAT	<b>JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY</b>	ALL-4-ONE
48	PINK CADILLAC	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	<b>NATALIE COLE</b>
49	TURN THE BEAT AROUND	<b>VICKI SUE ROBINSON</b>	GLORIA ESTEFAN
50	ENDLESS LOVE	<b>DIANA ROSS / LIONEL RICHIE</b>	LUTHER VANDROSS / MARIAH CAREY

and whether I wanted the newest type of lens that would allow me to possibly never wear glasses or contacts again or simply a basic lens insert that would still require corrective eyewear. Are you kidding I thought? That's like asking a DJ if he wants state of the art gear or if he still wants to use his old fashion equipment. The answer is always to go with what is going to improve and enhance the quality of the experience—whether it's your eyesight or your DJ performance. So I choose laser surgery and the best available lenses.

The day of the surgery arrived and though I knew many friends were praying for me and I was assured that this was the simplest and most common type of surgery performed in the world, my heart rate was well over one hundred. From the moment I first met my ophthalmologist, his professionalism and confidence had allowed me to put my trust in him that he would restore my eyesight to fully functional. When he arrived to greet me just prior to going into the laser/surgery room my heart rate went down



Mobile Beat's resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell's Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients' requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, *Play Something We Can Dance To*.

to normal. (Of course that might have also had something to do with the "happy" medicine that they had given me five minutes beforehand to relax me.)

Perhaps I should have mentioned that one reason my anxiety was so high was that this was the first surgery that I had ever needed. Except for having my wisdom teeth removed over thirty years ago when I was in the Navy and a cracked rib received from falling off a trampoline when I was twelve (had to wear an embarrassing girdle-like device all summer), I have been tremendously blessed with good health and have been injury free. It surprised me that the anesthesia only relaxed me and did not "put me under" as I had thought it would. When I was rolled into the laser room, I had both eyes closed. For a brief moment I mustered

the courage to crack open one eye... and the room looked like a scene from Star Trek. Two computer screens with lots of color and cooler machines than in any DJ gear catalog. In no time I was wheeled under the laser and though it was a little

*Continued on page 64...*





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# Never Say Never

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF GEAR HISTORY

By Stu Chisholm

**L**ast May, my first thought when I heard that the company Heathkit closed its doors was, “Heathkit was still in business?” The article brought back pangs of nostalgia, making me recall the days when I’d wander into their store in Warren, Michigan and see all of the exciting electronics that you could build yourself. The first color television that I bought myself was a Heathkit. The first VCR available to consumers was also from Heathkit. Generations of electronics aficionados built their chops on these things! Yet changing times and cheap overseas labor made do-it-yourself savings a moot point, and doomed the company.

It makes me wonder where the next wave of electronics techs will come from. Will electronic service also be sent overseas? Or will we simply build more disposable electronics, filling garbage dumps with even more e-waste?

## GOTTA ROLL WITH THE CHANGES

This also led me to think of how temporary some things are, including things that we DJs depend on. Many years ago, my friend and DJ extraordinaire, Tom Margellar (better known as

“Tom Knight”) built an addition to his home just to house his vast music collection. It was the biggest collection I’d ever seen, and indeed, when he died, it generated the very first public music auction held by the prestigious Doyle Galleries of New York. When he had built his addition, he wanted a custom-built look, yet like all of us even today, wanted to save money wherever he could. So to shelve his massive CD collection, he used several off-the-shelf CD racks from Sauder Wood Products that you assemble yourself. They only cost around \$20 a piece—barely more than a single CD! Showing me these, Tom said, “You’ll be able to buy these whenever you want as your collection grows.” Soon after, Tom would be gone, and similarly, Sauder Wood Products discontinued that style of rack. Now, if I need more shelf space for my venerable CD collection, I’ll need someone to custom build a look-alike unit, which will no doubt cost much more.

## PRODUCT CREEP (ME OUT)

The same thing happened back in the ‘80s when I was looking for a good way to store cassette tapes. There was a company called Pusher Products that made these cassette racks that were compact, yet when you wanted to access a tape, you’d push a button directly over the top and a simple mechanism pushed the tape out of its slot, a bit like the memory core scene in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I thought those were the coolest things I’d ever seen and bought several. I had shelves custom built around





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that rack design and, as my tape collection grew, added more and more of the racks. So, naturally, Pusher Products went out of business. Unlike the Sauder shelves, I can't find someone to "fudge" their unique rack design. They've all been replaced by the Napa racks that anyone in radio knows well. They're made of wood and just about anyone could duplicate them.

Flash-forward to the late 1990s when I built my home studio. Most of the DJs I know like to be able to do everything from ripping CDs to MP3 or doing minor edits for language or content, on up to creating elaborate mashups and remixes or producing music and video for a "Love Story" or montage presentations. Wanting to keep my options open with an eye toward the future, I had my studio computer built around Digidesign's DIGI-001 sound card and breakout box, running their ProTools LE software. At the time it was nearly \$1,000, but being a division of

boxes they came in. A DJ might invest more than \$1200—sometimes a LOT more—in their laptop, hard drives and maybe an external controller, only to get a year or two of service out of them. If they don't mind learning new software every few years, then they don't really care about companies closing or products being discontinued. This may be a good strategy for having "the latest and greatest" at all times, but it keeps overhead high and cost-efficiency low. In short, it's the other end of the extreme. It also puts a damper on long-term planning.

## BUILT LIKE A BRICK...

Happily, history is rife with exceptions. I've had my Rane MP24 mixer for nearly 20 years, and it had been an industry standard long before I finally got mine. No longer manufactured, they're prized by DJs and used ones frequently sell for \$450 and up



Avid systems, it promised to be the industry standard. For a while, it was. It didn't seem like very long, though, before they were introducing their DIGI-003. Avid announced that they would no longer support the 001. Users were cast to the four winds, their only option being to buy the new package, which would necessitate a new, more powerful computer.

I bring all of this up because of a promise made to DJs who purchased the Cortex HDC-1000 not all that long ago. Their USB media player, the first one of its kind that offered MP3 DJs a hardware-based alternative to laptops, had upgradeable firmware. At the product demo I attended, their spokesman emphasized that frequent free updates would mean that your player "would never become obsolete." When I heard the word "never," it should've set off alarm bells. As with all of the examples above, if you're in the DJ game for the long term, then you know that nothing is forever.

True to their word, the manufacturer indeed offered frequent updates, maintained a dynamic website with quick online support and it looked as if their HDC-1000 would be the first and final word in USB media players. That is, until the updates stopped and e-mails went unanswered.

Today, younger DJs are used to frequent upgrades and changes, mostly due to the nature of computers and electronics, which tend to go obsolete before the trash collectors pick up the shipping

on Craig's List and other outlets. The same holds true for the venerable Technics SL-1200 mkII turntable. Back in 1985, I bought a pair for \$600—a steal at the time—and even got free cartridges. Because I've kept them in pristine condition, I could easily sell them for \$1,000 today. I'm sure they'll outlast me.

So what's so different about these products? The first thing that comes to mind is that they've got nothing to do with software. Computers have yet to replace or improve on what they do. Secondly, they were built to last. If something does break down, they're easy to service, by design, thus making them popular with users and techs and earning them the title of "industry standard."

## THE TEST OF TIME

In the realm of MP3/music playback today, there is no established industry standard. At the dawn of the digital revolution for DJs, the innovator and reigning "king" of DJ software was DJ Power. Yet today, there are so many software platforms and hardware controllers, only time will tell whether a true industry standard will

emerge. Whatever the case may be, when you're considering new hardware or software, or putting together your studio or music room, beware whenever a salesman or spokesperson uses the words, "you'll never..." The lesson of history insists, you WILL. Plan for it. Until next time, safe spinnin'! **MB**



Stu Chisholm, a mobile DJ in the Detroit area since 1979, has also been a nightclub DJ, done some radio, some commercial voice-over work and has even worked a roller skating rink! Stu attended the famous Specs Howard School of Broadcasting and has been a music collector since the age of seven. Stu's guide to the profession, *The Complete DJ*, is available from ProDJ Publishing.



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# Game Show Host —and Still a DJ?

SOME FUN WAYS TO ANSWER "YES!"

By DJ Aimee D.

**T**his column regularly covers how to use game shows and trivia options to expand the event possibilities for your company. These services have generated a lot of Midweek Money for the entertainers who offer them. Yet many others can't get past the feeling that these services will take them away from doing what they love: simply being a DJ. However, with some creative thinking you can combine the DJ's primary mission—using music to help people have the time of their lives—with the crowd-pleasing concept of games. Here are two possible ways to keep the DJ in the gameshow host: production values and musical trivia.

## DON'T JUST PLAY IT, PRODUCE IT

The typical DJ has an extensive sound and lighting system, yet often when game shows are presented, the host relies completely on the game show hardware to generate the excitement. Why? Wasn't the sound and lighting a big part of the excitement of the gameshow hit *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* when it hit the air in 1999? When you have a lot of great gear available to you to "produce" the game show, why only bring the contestant stands or controllers, an LCD projector and screen for the score, and only a basic sound system? Game shows actually provide a great opportunity to get creative.

At the beginning of the game show portion of the evening, you could have a "big voice" announcer making the introductions

(of you and/or the event's host if it's someone else) from a pre-recorded sound drop. Have lights panning all over the room to find the contestants (simulating the cameras at the start of *The Price Is Right*) or centering on the players as they are introduced, like on *Jeopardy*. Also taking a cue from *Jeopardy*, be ready with your own "think music" during important moments, and set up intelligent lighting to be spinning and then centering on the contestant and host at each big moment of the game. (Make sure you have as much control as possible over the venue's lighting to make this atmosphere really come to life.)

And instead of giving away the additional lighting/sound, sell it as an "upgrade" to the game show (an interesting switch, huh?). You are offering to totally set the mood of the game show for them. Consider having a regular package that includes only basic sound and lighting, and then a high-end "Like On TV" package.

You are really only limited by your own creativity in putting together this type of show. Check out what they're doing on your own FAVORITE TV game shows to get inspired!

## NAME THAT CAMOUFLAGED TUNE

No I'm not just talking about playing clips from your DJ library for 5 seconds and having them name the tracks for points. I'm talking about going out and investing a bit in music. You can up the ante a bit by providing very different versions of people's favorite songs. You can track them down in almost any style (iTunes is an amazing resource for this), including "elevator music"-style, polka-style, reggae covers, or as I did recently, string quartet style. (See the sidebar for details on this very interesting possibility.)

Once you've built a library of these alt-tunes, you can use it for years; just make sure to keep track of songs you use and not repeat any at next year's party WHEN they hire you back because of all the fun they had at this year's event.

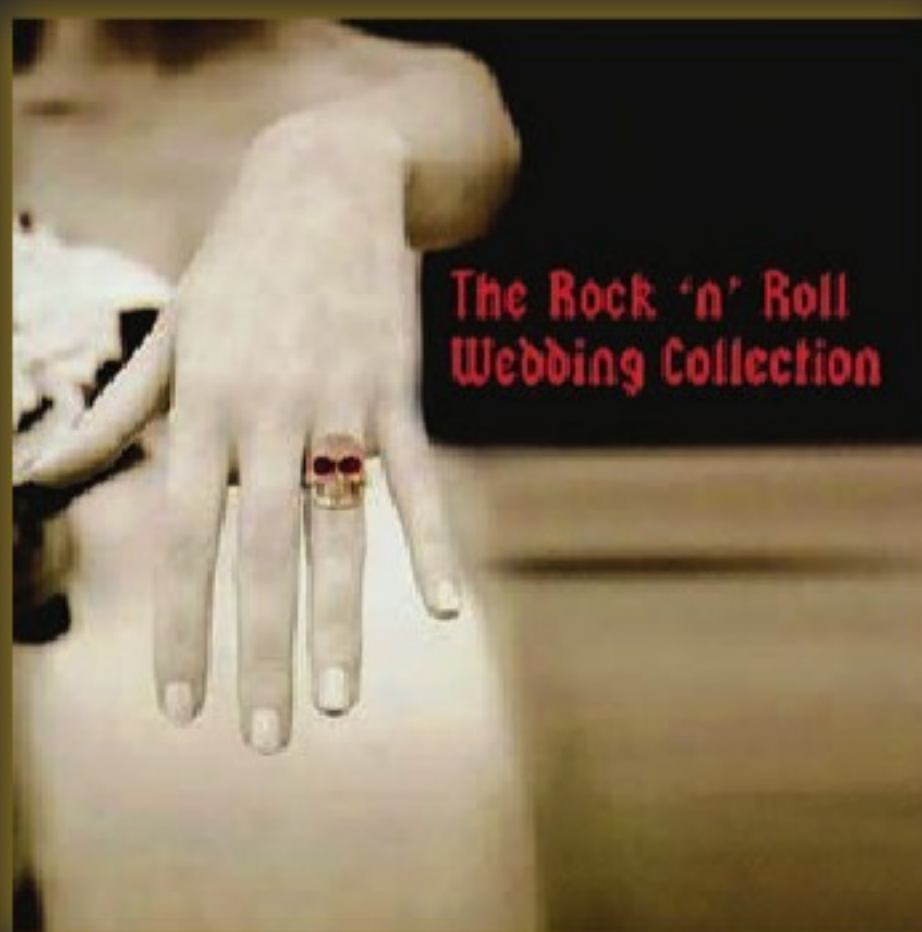
These are just a couple of ideas for how you can use your DJ skills and training to the max at game show and trivia events. Now back to your regularly scheduled program... **MB**

## Stringing 'Em Along

At the last NAMM music industry trade show, I heard a great group called the Vitamin String Quartet playing at one of the events. Rather than try to explain what they do myself, the following description from iTunes should do the trick.

The Vitamin String Quartet is a group of Los Angeles-based studio musicians who have carved out a unique niche for themselves, recording new versions of songs by well-known rock, pop, and country artists, arranged for a small string ensemble. The Vitamin String Quartet has released well over 100 albums (through their own Vitamin Records label), most of which feature the songs of a single artist (and in some cases interpret a single album in full), though the group has also released thematic collections based on a particular mood, style, or genre.

I'm up to just over 100 tracks of theirs, and I certainly recommend that you check them out. For starters, *The Rock n' Roll Wedding Collection* with tracks such as "Sweet Child o' Mine," "Living on a Prayer," and "You Shook Me All Night Long," along with 12 other tracks is very handy to play at the end of a wedding dinner music set to bring up the tempo. (I've even had a couple recently instruct me to play "You Shook Me All Night Long," as recessional music at a ceremony I did recently!) Their tributes to specific albums and artists include Billy Joel, KISS, Madonna, the Beatles, films of John Hughes, and Michael Jackson.





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# This Old Sound System

## A DJ REALITY SHOW



The idea for This Old Sound System idea came about as a result of Mobile Beat staff members discussing topics for future issues and apparently because some of us had recently been watching some reality “makeover” shows. One of the original reality TV shows was This Old House, originally hosted by Bob Vila, which many of us, no doubt, watched with our dads back in the day. The premise of the show involved a house being chosen to undergo some major remodeling, which often took several months and generated plenty of episodes. It was amazing to see Bob’s crew (who did most of the work) turn a once rundown house into a beautiful home.

We figured why not apply the same idea to the place where mobile DJs live--their sound system. So, we put out the call online for DJs who feel their sound gear needs an upgrade to swallow their pride, send us a video tour of the gear they’re using, and tell us why we should give their rundown system a complete renovation. We were looking for working mobile entertainers whose gear was the only thing holding them back from fully exercising their talent and growing their business. One subject was chosen. And we’ve recruited a crew of manufacturers to help fit our the chosen DJ with a “remodeled” sound system.



### WHO’S UP FIRST?

The first subject for This Old Sound System is Derain Davis of Rogue DJ Entertainment, in Lakewood, California. His video showing his sound system, (and his cat) was showed his sense of humor and revealed that he really needed some help with his rig. It appeared that almost the entire sound system came to him second hand, from various sources including friends, eBay and Craigslist. As Derain says:

“So I slowly started buying gear off of Craigslist, or pawn shops, b-stock-product, whatever I could find just so I could do their dances for them, just so they could have music. And the kids think...they really don’t kind of care. They just love the music is the main thing.”

His system is focused on a Behringer mixer and a classic Numark CDN 43 dual CD player that he now uses as a backup to a laptop playback system. The sound is routed through several EQ units, to a Lax amplifier, then into some carpet-covered Reference brand speakers. He did get new woofers for the speakers a year or two back, but for unpowered speakers they still weigh a whopping 65 to 70 lbs each.

### WHAT DOES HE NEED?

Derain’s biggest issue is presentation. The gear just simply looks terrible, and he talks about how he loses gigs because of the appearance. At first glance, we think he would benefit from a nice standup-style rack, or possibly a tabletop-style unit, with a better-equipped mixer that includes more sound processing





features. A powered speaker setup is probably the way to go for him as well. (External processing and an amp/passive speaker system is so 1990s.) Derain seems to have a real passion for entertaining. Once he has better tools to work with, we are confident that he will expand his business and be working much more often.

#### WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

This is where YOU come in. To help Derain rebuild his system, we've asked each member of the crew of sponsoring manufacturers to propose part of the solution, based on their company's product focus. **These potential upgrades are on the next few pages, and will be posted at the Mobile Beat Official Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/mobilebeatofficial](http://www.facebook.com/mobilebeatofficial), where you can vote on which option should be used.** Once the voting has finished, several weeks after this magazine issue hits the streets, we will finalize the core system, add some nice touches to round it out, and send it, gig-ready, to Derain.

So "tune in" online for the next episode of This Old Sound System, and then look for the final episode of this renovation in the next issue of Mobile Beat!

## Sound System To Be Remodeled

- Behringer VMX 1000 DJ Mixer
- Numark CDN 34 Dual CD Player
- Juice Goose Power Distribution Center 8.0L
- BBE Sound Sonic Maximizer 482
- Stage Works Power Conditioner (1800 W)
- Stage Works E23IX Dual-Band Graphic EQ
- LAX MA 3200 Power Amp
- Reference R-1502 Speakers
- Fender 115SA Subwoofer
- Samson VHF TD Wireless Mic

Other Pieces in Derain's carpeted rack system:

- Elation DMX Show Designer
- LyteQuest Pro SFC 288 8-ch controller

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Stanton DJ  
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# Sound System Solutions

GEAR MAKERS VIE TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS OLD SOUND SYSTEM'S UPGRADE OF ONE LUCKY DJ'S SETUP

## SPEAKERS



### QSC Powered Speaker Solution:

#### 2 QSC K8 8" 2-way Active Loudspeakers and 1 KSub Active Subwoofer

This K Series system is hands-down the perfect blend of sonic quality, portability, and overall presentation. It's also going to lighten his load considerably at load-in and load-out time, with the built-in casters on the KSub offering the ability to roll a 3,000W loudspeaker system through the venue with *one hand*.

Go to [www.qsc.com](http://www.qsc.com) for more info.

## OR



### Cerwin Vega Powered Speaker Solution:

#### 2 Cerwin Vega P1500X Speakers

Derain's passive speaker system forces him to lug rack-mounted amps around. The Cerwin-Vega! and Stanton DJ (see next section) offerings will give Derain a compact, robust system delivering deep bass and more performance options.

The flexible P1500X is a two-way, bi-amped, full-range bass-reflex speaker, with a 15" woofer and a high-frequency compression driver, powered by a custom Class-D amplifier. With a power rating of 1500W, the P1500X is one of the most powerful portable PA products in its class. It will not only make the external amplifier/passive speaker combination obsolete, but also has a 3-channel mixer onboard. Eliminating the need for external processors, the P1500X also features sound-tuning options like enhanced EQ, VEGA BASS boost and High-Pass Filters for using a separate subwoofer. The versatile P1500X can be used as a single speaker for a small venue or in pairs. It is the perfect choice to replace all of the Derains' current sound reinforcement hardware.

Check out [www.cerwinvega.com](http://www.cerwinvega.com) for more info.

## MIXER / CONTROLLER

### Pioneer DJ Mixer/Controller Solution

#### Pioneer DDJ-SX

When David Arevalo, Senior Marketing Manager for Pioneer DJ was asked what he would provide for this "remodeling job", he said, "It must be the #1-selling DJ mixer and controller, of course the Pioneer DDJ-SX!" This unit is the industry's



first 4-channel performance DJ controller/mixer designed specifically for Serato DJ software. While the overall design is rooted squarely in Pioneer DJ's tradition of rock-solid, road-worthy pro DJ gear,

the DDJ-SX meets the future head on, using the software as the basis for its configuration and ergonomic design, taking advantage of its features and integrating special trigger pads and controls. Oversized jog wheels featuring CDJ-style on-jog displays were included, for precise mixing and scratching. It has multiple inputs for expandability, and 8 soft-touch rubber controller/trigger pads per deck for loops/samples. The unit comes with Serato DJ software featuring 4 decks, dual-deck control, slip mode, syncable sampler and high-quality FX. The DDJ-SX can also be used as a stand-alone 4-channel mixer to connect CDJs, turntables, etc.

Go to [www.pioneerdjusa.com](http://www.pioneerdjusa.com) for more info.

## OR

### Stanton Mixer/Controller Solution

#### Stanton DJ SCS.4 Digital DJ Controller



Since Derain is carrying two systems as a fail-safe, he is lugging a laptop, dual CD players and CDs to gigs. Plus, software licensing and file backups are costing him time and money. Using the Stanton SCS.4 Digital DJ Controller, Derain can carry all of his music on USB flash drives or external hard drives, thus reducing his work load and cost. As far as setup is concerned, the SCS.4 DJ only needs cables for speakers and headphones; he can even connect his microphone to the unit. With a built-in mixer, the SCS.4 DJ uses less power and offers more built in effects than any CD player/mixer combination. Plus, the unit's onboard audio interface allows it to work with a computer as well. An enhanced 4-deck version of Virtual DJ LE is provided with the hardware.

Basically, a set of Cerwin-Vega! P1500Xs in combination with the Stanton SCS4DJ is all Derain needs to rock the party!

Check out [www.stantondj.com](http://www.stantondj.com) for more info.

## OR

### I DJ Now Mixer/Controller Solution #1:

#### Denon DN-MC3000 Pro DJ Controller + RM3000 Rackmount Kit, Ultimate JS-MPS1

Denon's DN-MC3000 is a compact, pro USB/MIDI controller that includes Virtual DJ LE (discounted upgrade to pro included with purchase) and is also compatible with NI TRAKTOR Pro software. The unit itself has a built-in audio interface, allows 4-deck control within the software, and comes with pro features such as balanced TRS 1/4" outputs, 2 sets of RCA inputs and a 1/4" TRS balanced mic input. An optional 19" rackmount kit makes this a truly mobile option. Loading this into the Odyssey case (see next section) with the built-in gliding laptop shelf will eliminate the need to stack lids and give a more professional look. The case itself can also hold a wireless microphone base, as well as a compact lighting controller.

Go to [www.idjnow.com](http://www.idjnow.com) for more info.







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### **I DJ Now Mixer/Controller Solution #2**

**American Audio 19 MXR Mixer/Controller and UCD-200 Dual CD Player w/USB Inputs**



For the best of both worlds, here's a combination of a USB/MIDI controller that can be used as an analog mixer, and a dual-CD player with USB inputs for accessing external digital storage. The 19 MXR is a 19" mixer with a built in USB sound card and MIDI control optimized for Virtual DJ LE (software included). Standard pro features include balanced XLR output, 4 line inputs, 2 phono inputs, 3 mic inputs, and a separate booth output, along with 3-band EQ with full rotary kills. The UCD-200 adds the familiar feel of CDs back into the mix, and includes features that DJs rely on, like seamless looping, tempo lock and frame search (for cueing). Both devices fit comfortably in the case and allow plenty of room for additional accessories.

More info can be found at [www.idjnow.com](http://www.idjnow.com).

### **CASES**

#### **Odyssey Innovative Designs Solution:**

**Cases for Mixer/Controller/CD Player solutions above**



For the Pioneer DDJ-SX, Odyssey provides the FFXGSPIDDJ SXBL case, featuring their patented Glide Style™ laptop platform, eye-catching LED panel with included color and effects controller, and famous patented black-on-black design. Also fitting the Pioneer DDJ-S1 and -T1 controllers, other features include Odyssey's exclusive, patent-pending, high-density bevel foam interior that angles upward for an efficient control surface. The stylish V-Cut™ removable panel allows for easy access to the front controls and headphone/mic jacks. A spacious ventilation pit under the controller is ideal for storing cables and other accessories.

With the Denon DN-MC3000 or American Audio 19MXR/UCD200 combo comes the Odyssey FZGS1002. This patent-pending design features a sliding laptop platform mounted on a traditional case. A DJ can set his laptop on the carpeted surface, plug in, and he's ready to go. Slide it forward to use

the laptop, and slide it back to use the mixer section underneath. (NOTE: This case is *not* designed to *transport* a laptop.)

For the Stanton SCS.4DJ unit there's the Odyssey FZGS1002BL. This patented Black Label Flight Zone Glide Style combo rack features Odyssey's patented sliding platform mounted above a 19" ATA case. Slide it forward to use your laptop and slide it back to use the mixer section underneath.

Check out [www.odysseygear.com](http://www.odysseygear.com) for more info.

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# Essential DJ Tech Skills

KNOWLEDGE = POWER

By Arnaldo Offermann

**A**s entertainers, we all come from different beginnings. Some of us, myself included, were skating rink DJs. Others got thrown into the game by being the DJ for their friends' parties. Some DJs just decided out of the blue that they wanted to be a DJ. There are hundreds, if not thousands of stories about how DJs got started. But the one thing almost all of us have in common is that we started blind.

*Photo by Monica Offermann*

This is especially true for many industry pioneers. There were no easy resources like Mobile Beat to teach them the ins and outs of this business. There was no internet (maybe GopherNet or ARPANET for Al Gore, haha) or other convenient way for them to learn. But they still were able to learn what they needed to survive and thrive in the entertainment jungle. One of the key things they had to master was their gear. While many things have remained the same in that area, today's DJs have even more to deal with, so it's good that we do have more resources to help us.

If someone about to enter this business were to ask you for the technical side of things, what would you tell them? This is my list, I hope yours is similar to it. I'm skipping the business and legal side of things; I am strictly talking about the techie stuff, the things that make us DJs geek out.

So what's the checklist of things a DJ should know?

## HOW IT WORKS

Are you using turntables? If so, do you know how direct drive works? Do you understand how sound travels from the stylus to the RCA? Or, are you using a laptop and a controller? If so, do you understand the ins and outs of your operating system? What are system services? What is an IRQ value? Why can having wi-fi running on your work laptop cause issues?

You should have a thorough knowledge of everything you touch. Some things may seem trivial, but having a strong grasp of all your technology will save your butt in the long-run. Think about it: If you're experienced with your equipment, you can troubleshoot any problem, at any time; and if something fails, it usually fails at an event.

For example, at one event we couldn't nail things down

quite right in terms of bass quality during the sound check. After some investigating, I found out a sub was wired backwards. An employee had accidentally wired it wrong while doing some cleaning/maintenance. When coupled with another properly wired sub, this created the worst possible cancellation. We quickly moved the sub out of the way and rewired it. Within minutes, the problem was solved. Knowledge gleaned from a few years of obsessing over car audio and learning everything I could about sound gear saved the day, and the client was none the wiser.

Another example, from the current computer DJ world: A nightclub that I just started consulting for had a computer crash. I was able to restore it and the DJ was able to get work done while I was working on it. Yes, a better backup solution was put in place. Understanding computers in and out was a huge help, but not as big as understanding the limits of the hardware and situation given. I'm not expecting every DJ to become an IT tech, but you'd better come darn close, considering how important a computer is to many of our setups!

I'll say it again: Learn your equipment in and out, one day it'll save your butt!

## RESISTANCE IS FUTILE...

...except when it comes to your job. Do you use electricity? LEARN IT! You don't need to memorize the NEC but you should understand the principles of things. Do you understand Ohm's Law? What about the simple equation  $A=W/V$ ? As part of knowing the ins and outs of my equipment, I know how much the mean power draw is per device. If I don't know it, I can use the aforementioned formula to help me derive the value. This is especially helpful when power is limited. Sure, two ETC Source 4 575W lights and a



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medium-sized LED show may sound like it needs two outlets, but I know (and you should, too) that if the venue is delivering 120V of power then both Source 4s pull 9.59 amps of power. My LED light show pulls 5 amps. This means that the show is right under 16A which works perfectly under a 20A circuit.

Calculate your equipment draw and note down the mean (average), initial (when you first plug it in) and peak power draws during use. Using a Kill-A-Watt meter, I know the highest and lowest and mean values of my sound system as I use and push it.

One time, back when I first started, I didn't pay attention and didn't know that an entire high school gym was wired to ONE breaker. Never again. Since that incident almost seven years ago, I've never had a tripped breaker since.

## DESIGNING YOUR SHOW

I love talking about light design! How well do you know your own lighting? A common mistake I see, veteran or beginner, is too many lights with similar output. Why would a light show have 5-6 beam effects but no scanners or even floods?

The wonders of good lighting design could fill many articles and I won't go into details here. (See my article on DMX later in this issue, and check out my videos on the subject!) The key thing to realize is that to create a great show, you need to know your lighting gear inside and out, and thoroughly understand how the lights work together.

## WHY DID WE BECOME DJS AGAIN?

Ask yourself that question a few times: Why did I become a DJ? Most likely it was because of your love of music and you've experienced the high of having an entire group of people react to your work. With all the other add-ons that are becoming the normal offerings of the average DJ, it is very easy for us to lose sight of the true art form of the disc jockey: programming and mixing music.

Here's the controversial part of the article, and this is purely my opinion. I believe a good party/mobile DJ must be two things:

1) An expert programmer: A DJ needs to be able to get the crowd moving and create the energy that matches the goal of the client. That goal could be to create a lifetime of memories or simply stir up drink sales. The music needs to be programmed to fit that goal.

2) An expert mixer: I believe with today's technology, it's pure laziness not to even attempt to beat mix. But I won't beat that dead horse. Whether you beat mix or not, an expert mixer at least understands basic music theory. You don't have to read sheet music, but you must understand why the numbers 4, 8, 16, and 32 are vitally important to our craft. You must understand how BPMs vary from song to song and how to properly mix music where it makes sense, both harmonically (Mixed-In-Key is huge—google it) and rhythmically.

(Notice I said "party/mobile" before the term DJ. When you

consider how many radio DJs don't always pick the music they get to play nor do they mix it, it's hard to put the above two criteria bits into the radio DJ's job.)

The beauty of our job is that it ultimately is an art form, despite of the medium you use to play music. I find it ironic how many old school DJs (I started on vinyl too, so hush) feel the need to tell up-and-comers that they need to pay their dues. Did Picasso "pay his dues" by chipping away at cave walls? After all, cavemen were the first ones to draw, so chisel and clay is the original painter's medium. That analogy may seem silly, but that's how things look to many outsiders looking into the DJ business.

But I digress...DJing is an art form; don't let anyone tell you how to do it. Just like any artist, if your audience tells you that you suck, well, you need to rethink things. But if other artists are telling you that, ignore them! You don't need to worry about researching HOW to do it, but rather WHY.

As DJs, we take requests—but not just of music. We take requests of style, of color, and even of theme. Which other artists are able to change an entire repertoire to fit the needs of the ones signing our checks? With an understanding of the basic principles

modded to fit who you are, you can do any type of event and it should still look and feel like one of your parties. Whether it's a laid-back wedding or a high-energy school dance, if you walk into one of my events you will know it's mine. The same should be said for yours.

## NERD IT UP!

I said I wasn't going to go too far into the business side of things, but I want to share a personal story. From third grade all the way to 12th, I spent most days in the library reading up on everything that interested me: HTML, Javascript, Flash, graphic design, photography, etc. This helped me to build a computer skill set that has allowed me to handle all my company's promotional work, web design, and of course blogging needs.

I also spent hours learning about electricity, plumbing, auto repair, and other trade skills. This too has saved my butt: I had a serpentine belt go out in my E150 on the way to an event. A new belt, a screwdriver, and a ratchet, and I was ready to go in 15 minutes. No way was I going to pay someone \$100 to do something I could do myself, especially when time was of the essence.

Don't be afraid to really nerd it up. Even if something that's not directly related to the business interests you—do it! You never know when those skills will be useful.

To sum up, it's easier than ever to get into this business. Don't use that ease as an excuse to skimp out on learning the core knowledge you really need. It may take a bit of extra time to fill your memory banks, but it pays off in the long run. Never say "I don't need to learn about \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ because I can pay a pro to do it," because that pro may not be able to bail you out when a crisis occurs. Again, I'm not saying don't hire a lawyer, mechanic, or computer tech when you need professional services. But if your computer glitches mid-event, you probably won't be able to get a "house call" from the Geek Squad in time, and you'll be screwed if you can't get things up and running right away! **MB**



Arnoldo Offermann is the creator of the video series **Master School Dances** and author of **R U Rockin' with the Best?! He has helped DJs worldwide become market leaders in school dances. In a soft economy flooded with \$500 school dance DJs, Arnoldo enjoys watching 4SchoolsOnly yield dances of 10-20x that price tag. Learn more about his wildly successful series packed with ideas that actually work at [www.MasterSchoolDances.com](http://www.MasterSchoolDances.com).**





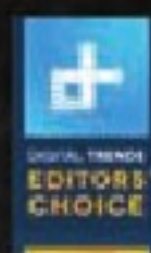
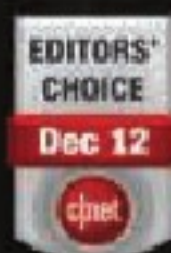
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# Better Business Through Computer Technology

**GETTING CONTROL AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS**

**PART 2: THE BEST OF APPS**

By Jim Weisz

**T**he last issue of Mobile Beat (May, #149) featured my rundown of some great web-based tools you might want to check out for your DJ business. This article focuses on mobile apps for your DJ business. Every app in this article was available for iOS and many were also available for Android. More and more apps are being provided in versions for both mobile platforms, so if you are on the fence about what platform to choose for your next phone or tablet, either iOS or Android should allow you to utilize many of the following apps.

## SQUARE

Founded by Jack Dorsey, who also created Twitter, Square launched in 2010 to accept payments on mobile devices. I started using Square not long after it was launched simply because I was familiar with Dorsey and trusted a company he was behind to handle my payments. I liked that I could swipe a client's card in person for a flat rate of 2.75% without any other fees. Square recently did a deal to handle transactions for Starbucks and is continuing to grow in popularity in the small business market. Platforms: iOS, Android. Cost: 2.75% per transaction when swiped or 3.5% + \$.15 for manually-entered transactions.



*Jim Weisz has been a DJ since 1999, primarily serving the wedding and school markets. Originally from Chicago, he relocated his thriving DJ business to Dallas in 2003. He used his company's web presence to effectively to re-establish his client base within a just a few months. Jim is a seminar speaker and also writes for MobileBeat.com on web issues. He can be reached at jim@discoverydjs.com.*

## DROPBOX

A great tool for sharing files among multiple computers/devices, Dropbox is also very helpful for sharing files with clients. For instance, I have had clients send me their slideshow pictures via Dropbox. I also use Dropbox to sync all my devices with the special songs and requests for my weddings. It syncs with my iPad as well as my Android phone. The only drawback with the iPad app is the files will only play if you are connected to the internet, or have "favorited" the file while connected to the internet. I also use Dropbox to give me quick access to files on my phone, such as a cheat sheet for the most common color codes I use for uplighting and music charts. Platforms: iOS, Android, Blackberry. Cost: Free for 2GB, but you can get up to 18GB free through referrals and other bonus offers. Paid plans start at \$9.99 a month (or \$99 a year) for 100GB.

## BOXYTUNES

If you're like me and put music for your events into Dropbox, Boxytunes is a nice app that can play any music in your Dropbox account. I have used Boxytunes a few times to play cocktail music from my iPad and it's nice to know I can use it in a pinch if I need to use my iPad for backup at an event. The interface is very simple and easy to use. Platform: iOS. Price: \$1.99



## EVERNOTE

If you have post-it notes all over your office, or a lot of little scraps of paper with important information on them, Evernote is for you. The concept is pretty simple—create a note and access it anytime, anywhere from any device. I use Evernote to save important information I need to access on a regular basis: to-do lists, ideas, or anything else I may want to access from my phone or computer. I pretty much use it just for notes, but it can also store web pages, pictures and document attachments. The premise behind Evernote is to “remember everything” and it really does help you do that. Platforms: iOS, Android, Blackberry, Windows Mobile. Cost: Free for most features. Premium service is available for \$5 a month (or \$45 a year) which is faster and includes more convenience features.

## VIDEO LOOP PRESENTER

This is a great app for running slideshows from your iPad. You can import your slideshow into the app and it will run it on a loop until you stop it. All you need is a Lightning or 30-pin-to-HDMI adapter. Then you just run the HDMI to your projector or TV and you're good to go. There are even options in the app to choose how you'd like to scale the video. Platform: iOS. Cost: Free, but you need to either import the slideshow via the iPad's camera roll (with a compatible file) or through Box.com. If you chose Box.com, you will need to pay to import the file (\$.99).

## DJAY

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention one or two apps for actually DJing, since DJing IS your business. First up is djay from Algoriddim. This app was originally released for the iPad in December of 2010. Since that time it has gained a reputation as the top app for iPad DJing. An interesting feature of djay comes through using a DJ cable made by Griffin. When used with the djay app, this splitter cable allows the DJ to play and cue music at the same time. It's nearly impossible to DJ without being able to cue, so this is a nice feature. Platform: iOS. Cost: Regular price is \$19.99, but has been put on sale for \$4.99 in the past.

## TRAKTOR DJ

No stranger to the DJ software scene, Native Instruments released their iPad app in February 2013. The app received rave reviews right out of the gate and it seems like it is giving djay some competition in the iOS market. One such indication might be the fact that djay was on sale for 75% off when I was writing this, which was just a couple months after Traktor DJ was launched. The interface is very different from djay, as it uses two large waveforms instead of virtual turntables. Several features allow you to manipulate the waveforms, such as creating cue points. Traktor DJ will even suggest songs in your iTunes library that are of similar tempo or key to what you are currently playing. Platform: iOS. Cost: \$19.99.

## FUN WEDDING

This app is actually targeted at brides and grooms, but it's a very useful app for DJs too. Fun Wedding utilizes the top request charts from DJ Intelligence, and allows you to quickly see the most-requested songs based on decade or type of wedding song (i.e. father-daughter dance, garter removal, etc.). The app will prompt you to update your lists every so often so they are current. Platform: iOS. Cost: Regular price is \$1.99. **MB**



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### AC427

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# I Like That, I Want That...

WHY IN THE WORLD DID I BUY THAT?

By Jim Papa

**L**ike most professionals I enjoy learning as much as I can about my business. To keep up with the newest trends I read articles, attend conferences, go to networking events, browse online and visit local DJ equipment stores. When I hear or read about new technology or equipment, my first instinct is to ask myself, *Could I use that?*

If it is something that makes my business more efficient or makes my work a bit easier, I tend to convince myself that I need one. I may not go ahead and buy it but I keep it in mind, at least until the next cool item replaces it on my wish list. Like everyone, I have bought equipment on impulse—and have learned that it's not the best way to get my gear.

I'm not suggesting that you not buy anything new; I just want to point out that you should be careful. When you don't do any research or have a well thought out plan, you have to live with the results, good or bad. You have to think before you buy.

**You should never go to the grocery store when you're hungry... In the same vein, never go shopping for new equipment on the day you absolutely need it.**

The last thing that you want to do is to find yourself saying, "I like that, I want that..." followed a few weeks later by "Why in the world did I buy that?"

## NIGHTMARE ON PARTY STREET

Years ago I was hired to DJ a Halloween Party at a home in an affluent suburb of New York City. Speaking with the clients before the party, it was clear that they wanted to host an event like no other; one that people would not only enjoy but would talk about for many years to come. They went all out, fully decorating their house for Halloween. All of the guests arrived in costume and there was plenty of food and drink. A few days before the party I was thinking about the gig. Without any permission I decided that a fog machine would really help set the mood. I didn't have one so I visited the local DJ equipment store and purchased what they had in stock. As the house filled with guests and the drinks started to flow the music and lights created the perfect Halloween atmosphere. There was just one thing left to do. It was the perfect time to "blow some smoke". It worked

great. The fog was everywhere and the guests loved the look. The music was loud and everyone was dancing.

But after a few minutes, the homeowner came running into the room and yelled at me to shut off the fog machine. It seems that it triggered the smoke alarm. He called the alarm company to report that everyone was ok and that it was a false alarm. Afterwards the homeowner told me that he was not angry at all and everything was cool. In fact, he really liked the fog effect. He said that he had settled things with the alarm company and he was going to solve the problem by shutting off the alarm for the night.

After a while, his positive outlook made me assume that I could try the fog machine again. Wrong. Suddenly, guests began to notice lights and alarms from two big red fire trucks driving down the street coming straight to the house. The firemen came into the dark and crowded house, axes in hand and inspected the entire home. They refused to leave until they questioned everyone and determined the exact source of the alarm: me!

Some of the people were so into the party that they thought the firemen were actual guests. Meanwhile, I was so embarrassed that I apologized over and over, feeling that the false alarm was my entire fault. However, the homeowner later apologized to me when he realized that due to having a bit too much to drink, he forgot to shut the alarm off.

So, it turned out that the party was a big hit and the homeowners got exactly what they wanted: an event like no other, one that people did enjoy and one that people would talk about for many years to come. Yet a lot of confusion and embarrassment could have been avoided if I had just taken the time to consider what throwing a fog machine into the mix might actually do. If I had done my research ahead of time, I might have known to check with the host about any fire detection systems that might be in use.

Buying on impulse rarely works out. As they say, you should never go to the grocery store when you're hungry. Most likely you will and spend more than you plan to and buy what you don't need. In the same vein, never go shopping for new equipment on the day you absolutely need it. Now, with many years of experience under my belt, when it comes time to purchase some new piece of technology, I first do some research, make sure it is in the budget, and determine if I really, really need it. Doing so helps prevent me from falling into that trap of "I like that, I want that... Why in the world did I buy that?" **MB**



*A born performer, Jim Papa has been singing since age eight, and in 1996, began Magical Music Entertainment, a karaoke/DJ entertainment business based on Long Island. In 2001 he decided to live out his dream and made Magical Music a full time venture. Since then he has entertained at hundreds of weddings, private parties, fund raisers and more. Today he sings and entertains at over two hundred events a year and has become one of the area's most requested entertainers.*



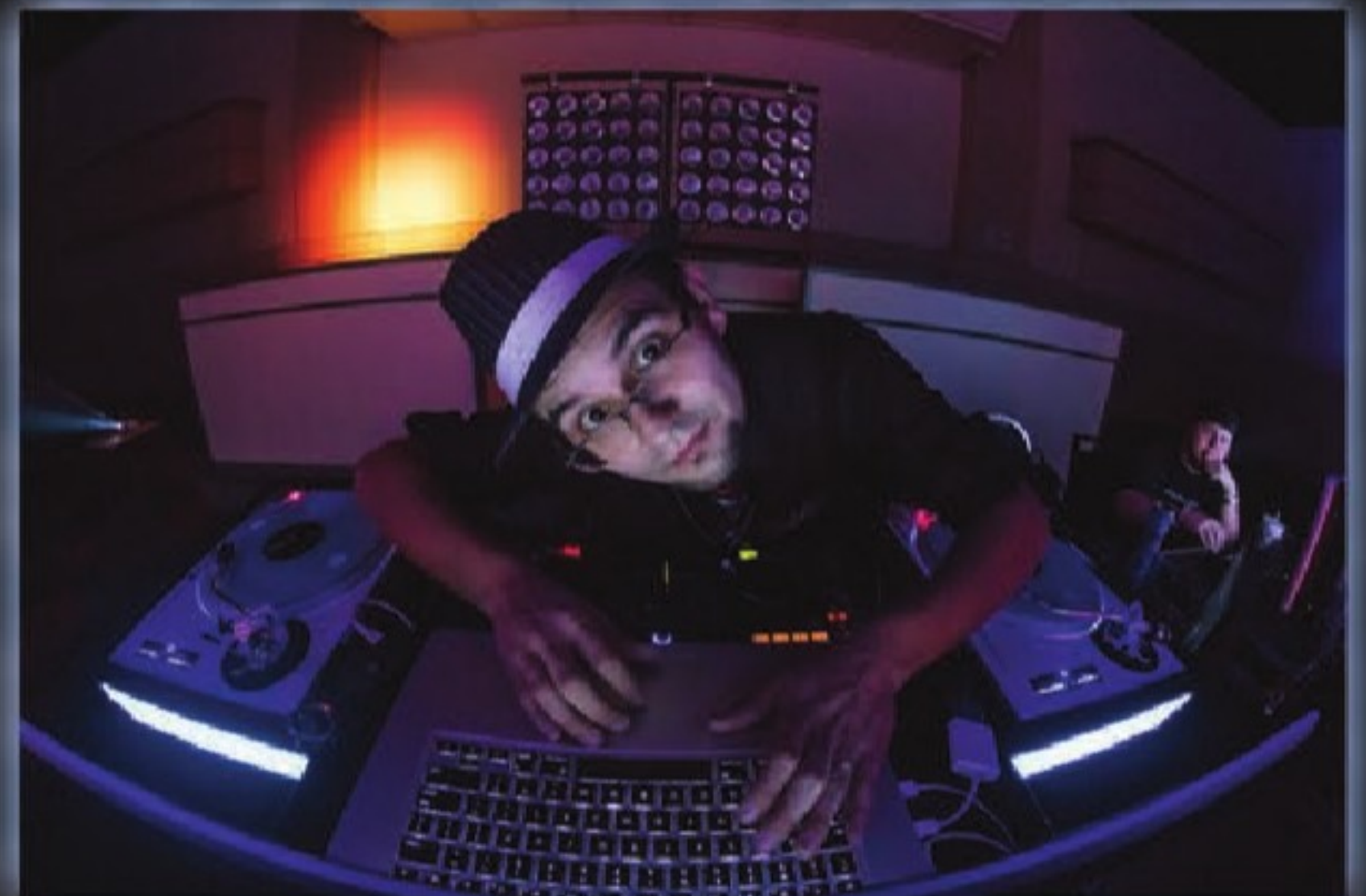
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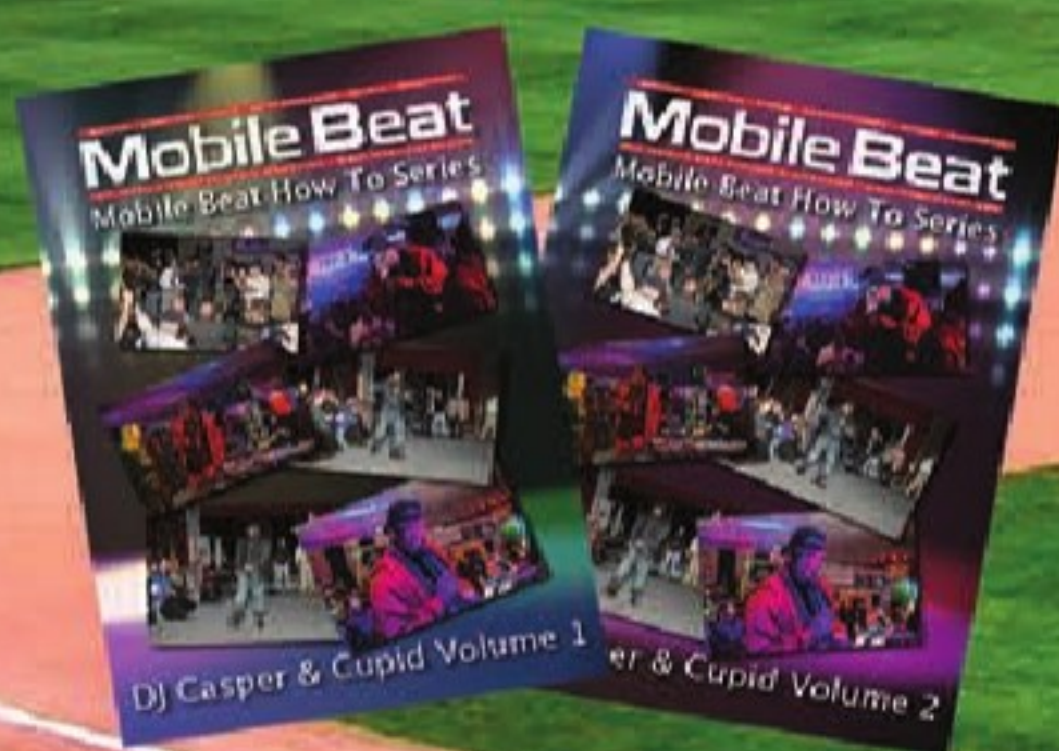


# Summer Means Baseball...and ANO

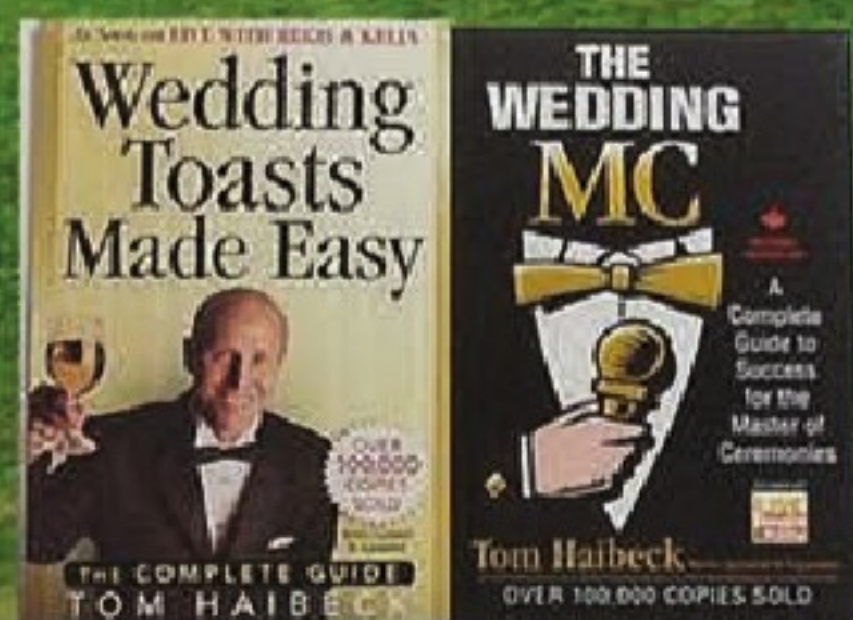
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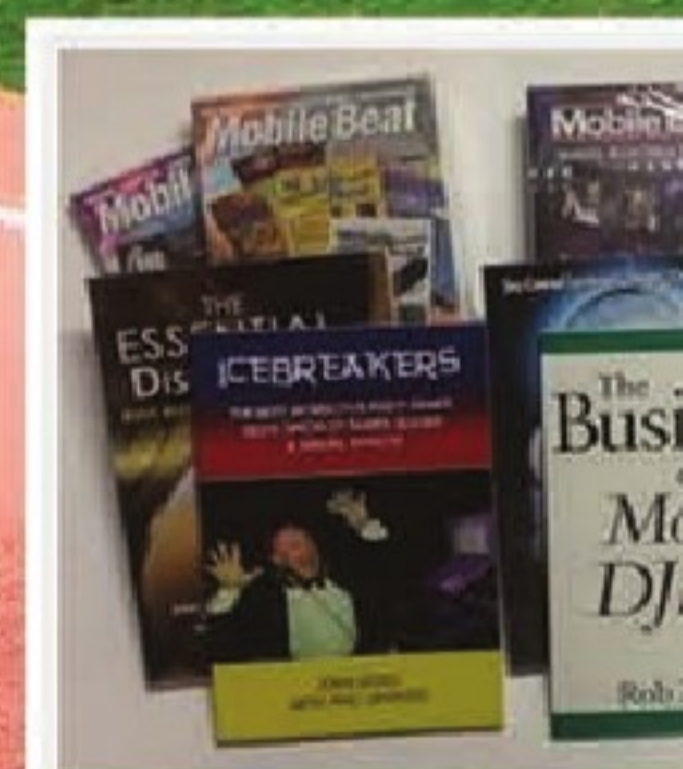


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# Crowdpleasing, Continued

## WHAT'S NEXT? THERE ARE MANY DOORS TO CHOOSE

By Mike Ficher

**Y**ou've been a mobile entertainer for years. You were a mobile disc jockey during the growth and maturity periods of the profession. However, now you've reached the point where you have trouble connecting with younger audiences; your body is taking longer to recover from an event or a weekend of events; you no longer want to continually invest time and money to keep pace with the rapid technology changes in the industry; you feel out of touch with the current music scene or you're just plain tired playing the same songs repeatedly. Or, maybe you just burned out.

Whatever the reason for your revelation, while you no longer may desire to be a *mobile* entertainer, you do not have to give up being an entertainer. Good news—you can still be a crowdpleaser!

### THE TOOL KIT

How do the skills of a mobile entertainer translate into continued crowd-pleasing beyond the dance floor? Perhaps my own experiences might provide some ideas for how you can transition to new ways of using those deeply ingrained entertainment skills.

For more than twenty-five years, I was active in the mobile entertainment industry, one of the first entertainers with my company, Dance Express (in the Bay Area of California), to consistently integrate

dance instruction and performances in mobile DJ-based presentations in the 1980s. Like any mobile, I serviced a wide array of weddings, class reunions, anniversa-

ry celebrations, corporate shindigs, sock hops, disco parties and country jamborees, I was frequently hired because of the dance instruction/performance additions.

### GOLDEN GATE TO HIGH DESERT

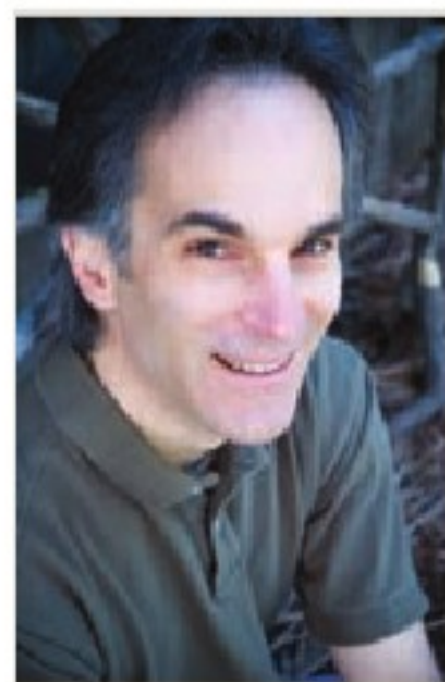
Since moving to Bend, Oregon ten years ago, I scaled back on the mobile business, due to a combination of other market opportunities and a smaller pool of potential clients available in my new location. The Bay Area is the eleventh largest metropolitan area in the United States with more than 4.4 million people, while Central Oregon ranks 249th with just over 162,000 residents (according to the Metropolitan Statistical Areas of the United States Census Bureau). A disinclination to invest in new entertainment technology, and a healthy dose of burnout also played their parts.

Yet, like most mobile entertainers, I enjoy performing and decided to pursue other outlets for artistic expression. My journey of past several years into other forms of entertainment has been fun, exciting, and rewarding, albeit not quite as lucrative as the mobile entertainment biz. Here are some additions to my curriculum vitae that grew from the same root as my mobile DJ persona.

### ACTOR

I have appeared in nine productions during the last four plus years, playing a range of roles, from an acerbic New York radio producer to a charismatic swinger, to the kindly Bob Cratchit, to a 1930s era shyster. Memorizing lines has become easier with each succeeding production (my line load is usually light to moderate, since I quickly found a niche as a character actor), and blocking feels like a natural extension of dance choreography.

As mobile entertainers, we play roles. Sometimes we are efficient music programmers, occasionally we dance instructors, periodically game show emcees, and more often today, event producers. Entertainers need to work as part of a "cast" in the production that is a successful event. It's no different for a stage production: we actors need to execute our roles and support our scene partners, and we need all personnel—crew, lighting, sound



*A business analyst by day, Mike Ficher is an actor, voice artist, MC, sportscaster, public address announcer and former mobile entertainer. He is also the host of the weekly syndicated radio program, *The Ultimate Oldies Show*. Mike synthesizes these varied experiences to illuminate historic connectivity and fresh perspectives on the mobile entertainment profession. More info at [mikeficher.com](http://mikeficher.com).*



and actors—working in sync for an audience-pleasing "show."

Go ahead and explore community and professional theatre—you might be surprised at the rewards.

### PUBLIC ADDRESS ANNOUNCER

During the past ten years, I've served as a public address announcer for collegiate level summer baseball, the State Little League baseball tournament, high school basketball, indoor soccer, and more.

As a mobile entertainer, your voice is one of your most important tools. Modulation, pauses, tone and clarity are valued even more in the field of public address announcing. As Bob Sheppard, the legendary voice of Yankee Stadium famously noted, "A P.A. announcer is not a cheerleader, or a circus barker, or a hometown screecher. He's a reporter."

Can you inform with clarity and brevity? Can you report with objectivity when needed and subjectivity when called upon?

Often, public address announcers will employ sound bites and music to enhance the game day experience—that should be a no-brainer for a mobile entertainer. However, you do need to select songs that fit an arena's game-day energy rather than fill a dance floor. But, the possibilities are rich.

### VOICEOVER ARTIST

Again, vocal skills are one of the key reasons disc jockeys are hired for an event. The difference in voiceovers is the ability to

come across as believable, to be able to act, vocally. And, even more critically, can you sell? Can you accept direction? Develop rich characters? Craft meaningful relationships? Listen? All in 30 to 60 seconds?

If so, voiceover work, particularly with the rise of home studios and the internet, is no longer bound by geography and access to production equipment. And, the money can be very lucrative if you can evolve into a first call, in-demand artist.

### EMCEE

How about showing up for an event with only your microphone? I've enjoyed opportunities to emcee dozens of events during the last several years without lugging and setting up equipment. Like Tom Bergeron, I listen attentively and often embellish scripted events with simple, quick and tasteful flourishes to enliven an event. This one is simple—you already have this one in your tool bag!

To be frank, the money will not likely be anywhere near as generous in any of these areas as can be earned in the mobile entertainment industry. Yet they may be just as gratifying, perhaps, even more so. You might even want to pursue one or more of these avenues along with your currently successful mobile entertainment business. But if you are looking for ways to exercise your performance muscles beyond the realm of the mobile dance floor, maybe now you know what can be next. **MB**

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# Defining Better Vocals



**YOU CAN USE YOUR INSIDE VOICE  
WITH DPA'S D:FINE™ HEADSET**

**By Dan Walsh**

**H**eadset mics seem like overkill to many mobile DJs. When presented with this option, the questions arise: “Do I really need the sound quality?” “Why should I pay that much for a mic?” “My wireless hand-held is what I’m used to—why should I change what works?” “They sound great, but those headset mics are a pain to deal with—they fall off and they seem like they’d break after just a few of my high-energy gigs.” And so on.

## FIRST, WHY A HEADSET?

Let me try to briefly address these concerns. As for sound quality, while it may not seem like there’s a big difference between the sound of a good handheld and a headset, if you take a closer listen, you’ll notice that the sound you get from a good headset is inherently smoother for one simple reason: The mic is always the same distance from your mouth, so there’s no fluctuation in level when you’re moving around. Plus, the combination of a high-quality element and static placement allows you—no, requires you—to use your “inside voice” rather than shout like a kid on a playground, even when you are doing your most energetic intros.

As for price, well, the old saw is true: You get what you pay for. Lately, even in the realm of mini-element headsets, I’ve noticed a growing number of bargain-priced models (and have tried a few), and the fact remains that even if it looks the part, if it’s not made to the highest standards, it will not perform to the level that a professional needs in sound or in functionality/durability.

Yes, the mic-in-hand approach is a very comfortable and reliable DJ standard. Yet, when you remove the mic from your hand, I think you’ll quickly get used to the freedom of movement the headset affords. Imagine not having to keep holding a mic near your mouth while teaching the crowd the latest line dance.

And finally, when you choose the right headset, the concerns over secure ear placement and potential gear fragility fade away. This brings us to the actual subject of this article, DPA’s d:fine dual-ear headset microphone. For mobile entertainers with questions like the above, this model should eliminate any hesitation one might have in moving into the headset realm.

## DEFINING INFORMATION

The d:fine is available in both omnidirectional or directional (cardioid pattern) models. I was sent the omni version, which has a more natural sound and avoids the “proximity effect” (boomy sound when the mic is close to the source) that is inherent in directional mics. Unless you typically perform with A LOT of background noise (not just loud music), you wouldn’t want the directional version for mobile DJ work.

The omnidirectional d:fine provides a frequency range of 20Hz to 20kHz, with a 3dB “soft boost” in the 8-15 kHz range to

increase vocal clarity. The unit’s dynamic range is listed at 97 dB, while its maximum sound pressure level (SPL) before clipping is 144 dB. The headset is equipped with a MicroDot connector, and a variety of other connector options are available as adapters from DPA (Mini-XLR, Mini-Jack, 3-pin Lemo, TA4F) enabling use with transmitters from all major microphone manufacturers; my review unit was provided with a Mini-XLR adapter, which I plugged into an older Shure PG system.

Relative to mobile DJ use, it was interesting to note that the temperature range for operation is -40 °F to 113 °F, and it is rated up to a relative humidity of 90%. So, no matter how hot and sweaty your performance may get, the d:fine is ready to handle it!

To fit your body and performance style perfectly, three boom lengths are available for the omnidirectional model (4.3", 3.5", 1.6"). Other convenient features and accessories include: a service connector that splits the cable from the microphone boom and allows for easy cable replacement; three included windscreens; a pre-mounted moisture/makeup filter; and a clip to secure the cable to clothing. The d:fine is available in black, beige, brown, and lime green. (That last one is for the aliens among us, I’m guessing.) Lest the term “boom” above sounds somehow massive, rest assured that the total weight of the d:fine on your head would be less than an ounce.

Another well-thought-out convenience included with the d:fine is its case. It’s a solid, yet lightweight zippered case, with ample room for adapters, wind screens and batteries. It sports a lime green stripe around the zipper, which looks cool, but is also practical for handling in dark situations.

## DOUBLE = NO TROUBLE

While the d:fine is available in a single-ear version, I was sent the dual-ear model. Having used only single-ear headsets in the past, I was interested in how different the dual-ear approach would work for me. It turns out that I now think this is the best way for a mobile entertainer to go. The d:fine’s rubber earhooks (with the boom mounted under one ear) have just the right amount of flex and friction to stay snug to the ears, and the neck brace tying the two ears together gives the dual-ear d:fine a feeling of total security. While no one was looking, I ran around, jumped and gyrated as violently as possible without injuring myself, and found that the headset stayed perfectly in place. No matter how good the fit of a single-ear headset, I find I always worry about it falling off. This dual-ear version completely eliminated that worry. Besides using it myself, I also used the d:fine to mic my pastor and a few other speakers in my other life as a church sound tech. Everyone who wore it said it felt completely secure, even to the point of forgetting it was there.

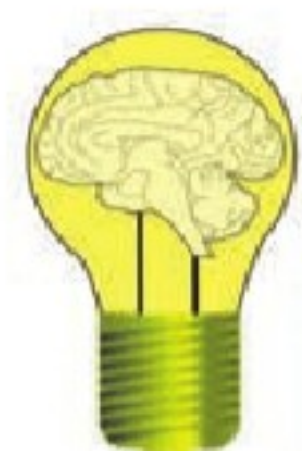
I should mention that one key to making any headset mic feel secure is to employ the clothing clip. It may seem obvious,

*Continued on page 64...*



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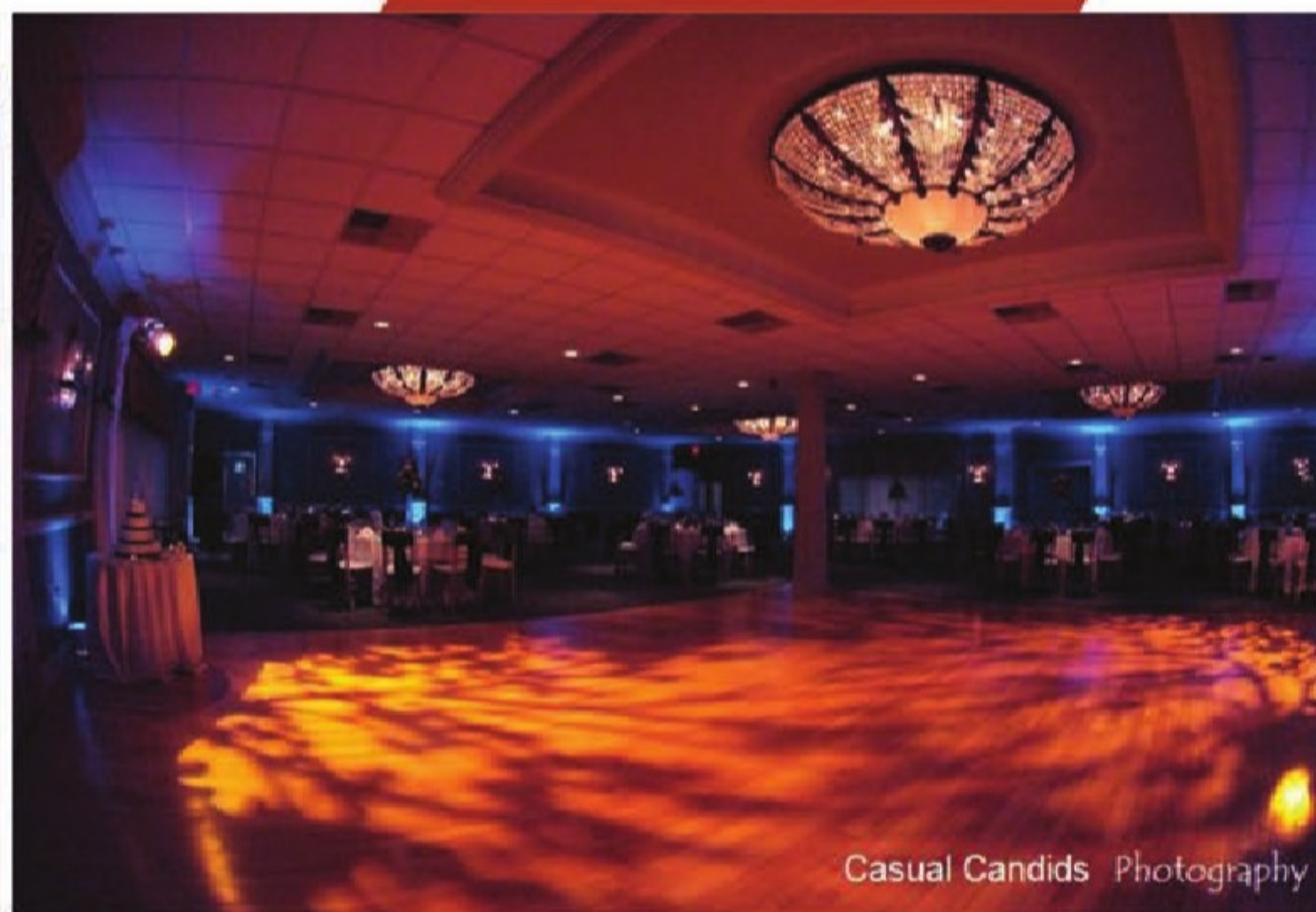
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# Alluring Powered Loudspeaker

EV ZLX-12P: HE THINKS THE SPEAKER'S SEXY

By Jim Weisz



**T**he first word that came to mind after I opened the boxes containing the ZLX-12P speakers I was supposed to review was "sexy." Yeah, I said it—I thought a speaker was sexy.

Prior to receiving my demo speakers, I hadn't seen any pictures of the newest speakers from EV, so I didn't know what to expect. But I immediately fell in love with the look. Despite using 12" speakers for the last 10 years, there's just something about the design of these speakers that I love. They also feel more compact than other 12" powered speakers I have used and seen.

Weighing in at just over 34 lbs. each, the ZLX-12P speakers are made of a composite material, and are fitted with a custom built 1000W amplifier. Like just about all speakers of this size, they have a handle on the side. In addition, they also have a handle in the back at the top and

bottom. Those additional handles made it much easier to get the speaker up on a stand.

As far as connections go, beside two Speakon 1/4/XLR inputs, there's a single 1/8" mini jack as an AUX-in. I was a little disappointed there wasn't an RCA input. I have quite a few 1/8" to RCA cords, which is how I would plug my iPad or other portable device into my other powered speakers. But EV chose to go with an 1/8" input instead of RCA. I can somewhat understand why they did that, but I think it would be more useful to have the RCA input.

The ZLX-12P includes a Digital Sound Processor (DSP), which you can control through a knob and LCD screen on the back of the speaker. There are several presets for different applications (music, live, speech, and club), as well as an option to tell the speaker if it is pole mounted, attached to a bracket, or being used as a monitor.

In addition to those settings, you can adjust the bass and treble plus or minus 10db. If you're using the ZLX-12P with a sub, you can activate a high-pass filter that ranges from 80hz-120hz.

Another feature in the DSP menu toggles the front LED on or off. I prefer to have it off, but I do like that there's an option for the LED to turn on when the speaker's built in limiter has been activated.

While the LED screen is nice to give access to all aspects of the DSP, it also helpfully shows the levels for both inputs. It will also show if you're clipping on either channel or if the limiter has been activated.

## IN THE FIELD

I played around with the speakers a bit at home to become familiar with them, so I was really looking forward to using them at a couple of weddings. The first wedding I used them at was a little smaller—about 100 guests. However, it was a pretty large room.

I wanted to run the speakers in the default settings to see how they sounded at the first wedding. I was very happy throughout the





sound check and the entire evening. Both music and the spoken word sounded great. I ran them at about 60% all night and they performed flawlessly. The bride and groom were really into country music, so I didn't play a lot of songs with significant bass. Fortunately, I knew my next wedding would have a different vibe, so I would be able to hear how they sounded with some bass-heavy songs.

The following weekend was a wedding with about 200 guests. However, the room was smaller than the previous week's wedding. So I felt very confident they would be able to handle that size room and crowd.

For this wedding, I wanted to adjust some of the DSP settings to see how noticeable the changes would be. During my sound check, I tested a few of the presets and adjusted the treble and bass. I decided I liked everything set to default, but I bumped the bass up 7db.

Everything was working great and sounded great throughout dinner and into the beginning of dancing. I started with some oldies, and things were still going well. However, once I got into current hip hop, I noticed the speakers were blinking with "limit." I tried backing off the gain on my board a little bit, but then I thought they needed to be louder. So I went to each speaker and dropped the bass to +4db. After making the adjustment, I raised the levels on my board again. I was still happy with the volume at that point and I didn't notice a major difference in the bass—although I did bump up the bass on my board a bit.

### BRINGING SEXYBACK

After 2 weddings, I had used the speakers enough to write a good review on them. But when I was packing up my car for my wedding last

weekend, I took a look at my current speakers, and then looked over at the ZLXs. It took all of five seconds to decide I wanted to bring the ZLXs out again. It couldn't hurt to use them at another wedding so I could really formulate my opinion for the review, right? At least that's what I told myself as I left my usual speakers at home.

The third, and final wedding, went just as well as the other two. This wedding was about 100 guests, but it was a pretty large room. Music and announcements again sounded crystal clear. It was at this wedding I realized how much I appreciated the extra handles at the top on bottom for putting on a stand. I will definitely miss those handles when I ship the demo speakers back!

Would I personally buy these speakers? Yes, and I'm even considering getting a pair soon. I would pull the trigger in a second if they were just a bit louder. I would have no problem doing a wedding with just these speakers for up to about 150 guests. If I were using a sub, I'd bump that up to about 225-250. That would cover most weddings, and is comparable to what other 12" powered speakers are capable of.

Whether you're in the market for new powered speakers, or are looking to move from passive to active, I think the ZLX-12P would meet the needs of many mobile DJs. Their combination of great sound and an attractive price point, makes them a very solid choice when compared to other 12" powered speakers. **MB**

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# Xtremely Flexible Team

**CERWIN-VEGA'S P1500X AND P1800SX: A TRULY INTEGRATED TOP-SUB COMBO**

By Dan Walsh

**T**he latest from the purveyors of power and punch at Cerwin-Vega! is a versatile pair of powered speakers, the P1500X full-range loudspeaker and the P1800SX subwoofer. Although each model is perfectly capable of performing its specific role (a stand-alone PA speaker or a subwoofer to expand any system's low end), this pair of speakers is clearly presented as a matched set.

And not surprisingly, it is well-matched. It's easy to hook them together, and they have some simple controls to help you adjust input and output combinations to suit your situation. On its own, the P1500X provides a solid, powerful, full-range option that can handle good-sized crowds and relatively large spaces; once connected, they provide a sound-reinforcement solution that can take on much larger gigs.

## P1500X

The P1500X is two-way, full-range speaker unit, driven by a high-output Class D amplifier, which is rated as providing 1,500W peak/500W continuous power, and a maximum of 134dB SPL. Sound is projected by 1.75" high-frequency and 15" low-frequency drivers. It weighs in at 53 lbs., housed in a heavy-duty, polypropylene cabinet measuring 27.5" x 17" x 13.5".

For input and output, its back panel is equipped with dual Neutrik XLR/TRS combo jacks for two channels (both mic/line switching), and dual 1/4" TS inputs for a third. The first two channels also feature

dedicated Thru outputs, while beneath the third channel is a mono Mix Output jack for connecting to the subwoofer. (As a convenience for DJs, two 1/4" to RCA adaptors ship with every P1500X.)

The adaptability of the P1500X becomes clear when looking at the right top on the back panel, with its four switches for adjusting sound and signal output. Engaging the Enhanced EQ switch takes the mid-range down via a well-crafted curve to allow the bass to come to the fore and the high end to sparkle; this effect is specifically aimed at DJs. But if there's still not enough low end, there's a switch for Vega Bass Boost that does the obvious, also by utilizing a well-chosen frequency curve. With these two switches alone, I was able to tailor the sound to a variety of performance spaces. While other manufacturers have been expanding the EQ options on the back of their active speakers, the P1500X aims toward the minimal. Yet I found that these controls were all I needed to create a solid foundation upon which to build a more detailed mix.

More control is available, however. A high-pass filter switch provides attenuation below 80Hz, for when you connect the subwoofer, or for other applications where bass should be minimized (such as using the speaker as a stage monitor). One more switch enables or disables the speaker's handy front-grille "limiter engaged" light.

I'll mention here that although the connections to be made for a top+sub configuration are straightforward for non-manual-reading expert types, I did appreciate the clearly written and illustrated instructions in the manual for getting this speaker team hooked up and ready to rumble. The back of the manual also features some setup diagrams for various sound situations, which would be particularly helpful for the less-experienced user.

I'll mention here that although the connections to be made for a top+sub configuration are straightforward for non-manual-reading expert types, I did appreciate the clearly written and illustrated instructions in the manual for getting this speaker team hooked up and ready to rumble. The back of the manual also features some setup diagrams for various sound situations, which would be particularly helpful for the less-experienced user.

## P1800SX

Speaking of rumble, the P1800SX subwoofer brings the bass with an 18" driver housed in a reinforced 18mm-thick wood cabinet, and weighs in at 77 lbs. It is driven by a Class D amp, rated at 2,000W peak and 650W continuous power, with 136dB max SPL.



The I/O section features two Neutrik XLR/TRS combo inputs, each again paired with discrete XLR thru connectors. An XLR "LINK OUTPUT" jack allows hooking up to either another sub or a full-range speaker. An "HPF THRU & LPF SUB" switch mirrors the top speaker's high-pass filter and allows for the addition of a second filter, which attenuates the subwoofer frequencies above 80Hz. Thus, one can easily combine the P1500X and P1800SX with the signal going in either direction—from top to sub or sub to top—another helpful bit of versatility. The subwoofer also features Vega Bass Boost, guaranteeing a gut-thumping bass punch when you need it.

## TESTING THE TEAM

I tried out the two speakers as a combo and separately in a number of different applications; they proved their flexibility by providing excellent sound in each situation.

For an intimate gathering in a small hall with low ceilings, I used a single P1500X to cover the room. The speaker's unadorned sound was perfect for dinner music, and when the event kicked into higher gear, simply engaging the Enhanced EQ





was enough to keep the beat foremost, while maintaining a crisp high end. For a modest outdoor event, adding the Vega Bass Boost helped the low end make an impact, even with the open-air dispersion.

Another no-sub-required gig involved the small worship band at my church (with about 300 people in the room), including only a few singers, acoustic guitar, some acoustic instruments such as flute and cello, and congas for percussion. In this case, the P1500X sounded fine, au naturel, but really brought out the details of the band's sound when the Enhanced EQ and Vega Bass Boost were both engaged. Based on that result, I'm confident that the P1500X would also work well for many wedding ceremony PA applications.

Adding the P1800SX to the mix really took things to the next level. Besides the obvious increase in overall sonic impact, what impressed me most was a hard-to-describe phenomenon. Rather than simply adding its own distinct thump to the sound, engaging the sub expanded the overall sound in such a way that it was almost as if the two speakers were really one unit. Sure, a pro can set up a smoothly biamped system with full-range speakers and subs combined with the proper crossover frequencies, etc., but this pair made the process as easy and painless as possible. Clearly the Cerwin-Vega! team put a lot of effort into designing these speakers to be truly integrated.

As with any powered speakers, the added weight of these units is an issue for mobile DJs. However the compact size of the subwoofer is a plus in the transportation column, and it weighs in lighter than many other subs in its class. Ultimately, with the proper cart in hand, the weight really isn't a problem.

With this combination of the P1500X and P1800SX, Cerwin-Vega! has added a well-balanced pair of performers to its solid sound-reinforcement roster. If you are looking for a good-sounding and good-looking full range active speaker, the former should definitely be on your list to check out. And if you are thinking of making the jump to full-on, subwoofer-fortified dancefloor sound, both members of this versatile team are worth your serious consideration. **MB**

[www.cerwin-vega.com](http://www.cerwin-vega.com)

# To the Ceremony and Beyond

**YAMAHA STAGEPAS 600i: A GREAT IDEA GETS EVEN BETTER**

By Ryan Burger

This whole review can be summarized by what Jake Feldman, my partner in BCP Live, just said here in the office when I asked him about using the Yamaha StagePas 600i over the last couple weeks "The older versions of the Yamaha PAS could be used for ceremonies, but this (the 600i model) system is *perfectly* meant for ceremonies." We had the system for a month and took it out on wide variety of events, including an after-prom game show, a wedding ceremony, and a karaoke event for middle schoolers. It excelled in all venues.

The 600i and its little bro the 400i are the successors to the 500 and 300 models. It has been a while since Yamaha has updated these models but it was definitely worth the wait. They added better pole mounts within the speaker cabinets, a whole new mixing/amp system with seven distinct inputs (for a total of 10), a USB connection for iPhones or iPads, and more. The look of the system was nicely updated too. Major differences between the 500 and 600i include a growth in amplifier power from 200W to 340W per channel, and an increase in LF speaker size from 8" to 10".

In use at the events, we found the sound to be fantastic, and had no feedback problems. We enjoyed being able to use the USB plug directly for better sound coming out of our iPhones. (That's rather than 1/8" plugs; other smartphone users will unfortunately not be able to use this USB port, which is Apple-optimized.) As sound sources, we used anywhere from two to four microphones, plus a karaoke player, along with the iPhones. Another helpful addition, for those times when you need to just set up fast and get the sound flowing, is the 600i's 1-Knob Master EQ™, which lets you optimize the system for speech, music, or to boost the low end.

If you haven't used the Yamaha STAGEPAS series of portable PAs before, they are definitely worth checking out. Small conveniences like the storage areas in the back of the speakers for the mixer/amp unit or cables help make life for a



mobile DJ a little easier. The case is now sold separately, but looks great and again, is a nice step up from the previous rolling cases. Everything about the STAGEPAS series has clearly been carefully improved by Yamaha's engineering staff. **MB**

[www.yamahaproaudio.com/global/en/products/pasystems/stagepas\\_400i600i/](http://www.yamahaproaudio.com/global/en/products/pasystems/stagepas_400i600i/)

## STAGEPAS 600i Portable PA Key Features:

- 680W (340W+340W) pwr output
- Detachable 10-ch powered mixer (4 mono mic/line + 6 mono / 3 stereo line)
- 2 redesigned 10" speakers
- iPod/iPhone USB connection
- SPX digital reverbs
- feedback suppressor
- 3-band channel EQs + 1-Knob Master EQ™
- Switchable stereo/ mono inputs
- Phantom power



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ISSUE 149 MAY 2013

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## REVIEWS

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# Karaoke from Every Angle

WITH TRICERASOFT, KARAOKE IS SUITE

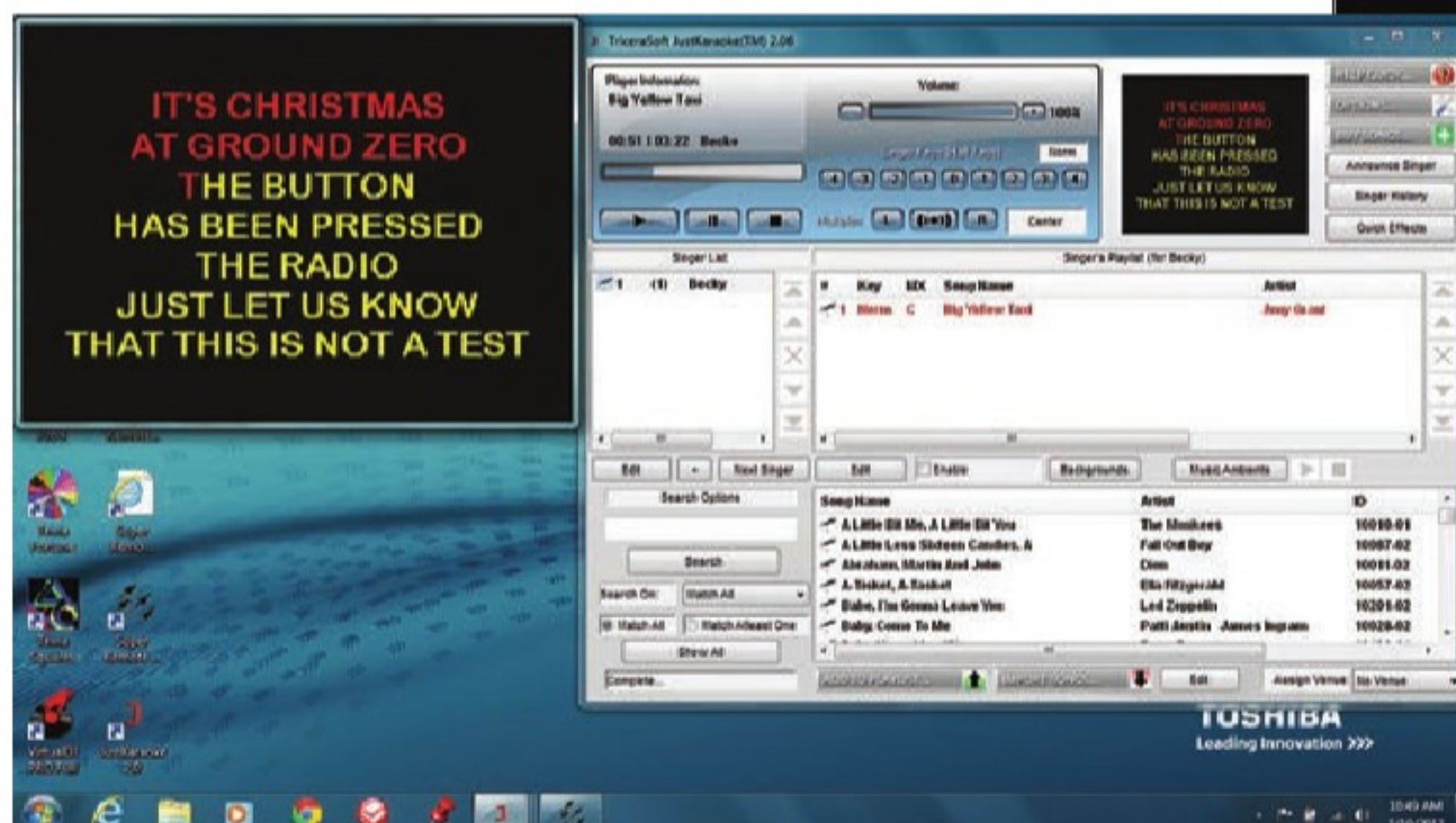
By Ryan Burger

**M**y DJ/production company, BC Productions, has gone through several generations of karaoke presentation. While we have never been heavily into the singalong scene, we have always offered it to our clients. Over the last two years or so, we have started to promote it more, since it has become a lot easier to manage, with MP3+G files being legally obtainable, and the software getting more user-friendly and efficient.

In the arena of software solutions for running a karaoke show, the name TriceraSoft is a leading player. The company has been serving the DJ industry for years, having a strong presence at the last five or six Mobile Beat Las Vegas DJ shows, and has been constantly improving their software based on input from DJs and KJs "in the trenches."

## IF YOU BUILD IT...

I set aside an afternoon to start the process of building up two Windows computers with the full suite of TriceraSoft software. I also uninstalled our two KJ libraries from the



machines we previously had them on, and started copying over the libraries to the internal drives of the new computers. (BC Productions owns two copies of both the Sound Choice Gem Series and the Chartbuster 12K libraries.) With 61GB of files in the Sound Choice library and just under 95GB in the Chartbuster library, I started the copy process immediately and then went on to licensing the KJ software to be installed on each one of them. I've found that one of the keys to staying clean on licensing, which I recommend to other DJs as well, is labeling the source drives that they came from, and which libraries were on which computers. It just makes good organizational and business sense too.

The Software:

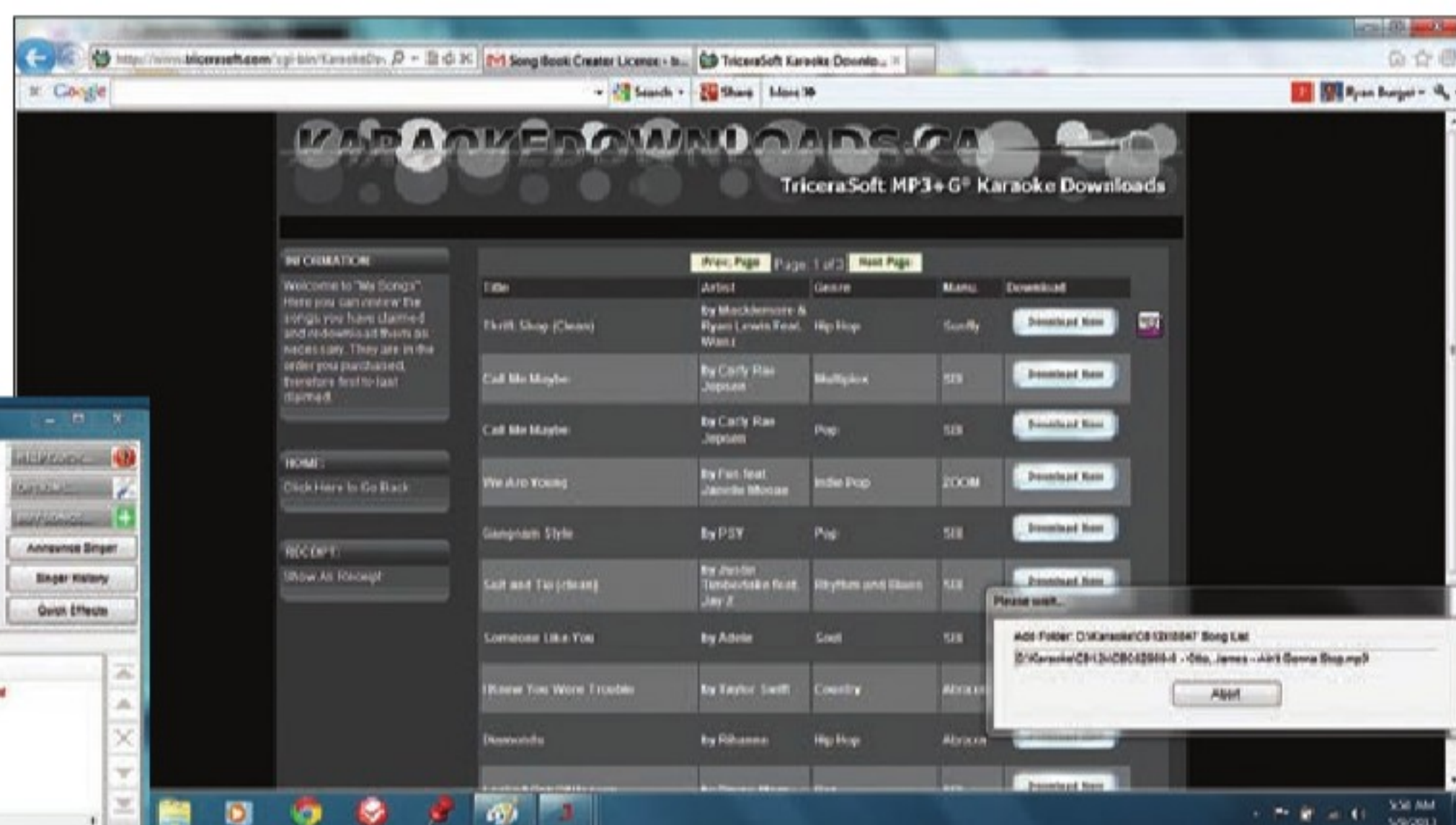
- **Just Karaoke v2** – Just a great KJ program that anchors the suite.

- **Super Remote Request Tool** – This is a way of taking requests using extra screens or serving as a server for people on the facility's wi-fi network to make requests
- **Song Book Creator** – Still gotta have the song books, no doubt about it.

Downloading all of these was very easy and licensing up the machines with their codes tied to BC Productions went very well. While the MP3+G files were still copying over on the machines, I was able to do this, plus work on uninstalling all the crap-ware that computer manufacturers put on their machines. I installed the TriceraSoft karaoke software with all their defaults.

## DUPATED TUNAGE ONLINE

TriceraSoft has also created a service to help KJs stay complete-



ly up to date, at all times, at KaraokeDownloads.ca. Since my libraries were about two to three years old, I created an account for each of them (BC Productions 1 and BC Productions 2) on the site and purchased the 50 most popular tracks for each of the two libraries. This was done to aid in tracking the licensing as I mentioned earlier with the master libraries. The tracks were listed on KaraokeDownloads.ca's easy-to-use chart at [karaokechamp.com/song\\_ranking.html](http://karaokechamp.com/song_ranking.html).

The Just Karaoke software knows how to work with various file naming structures and asks you to provide an example of the file name/tag for that batch of imports. That way if the publisher puts the release# first, then the title, then the artist, it treats it differently than if they put it in a different order.

Finally I had 17,828 tracks loaded and it was time to move them over to the Song Book Creator.

## I COULD WRITE A BOOK...WAIT, I DON'T HAVE TO!

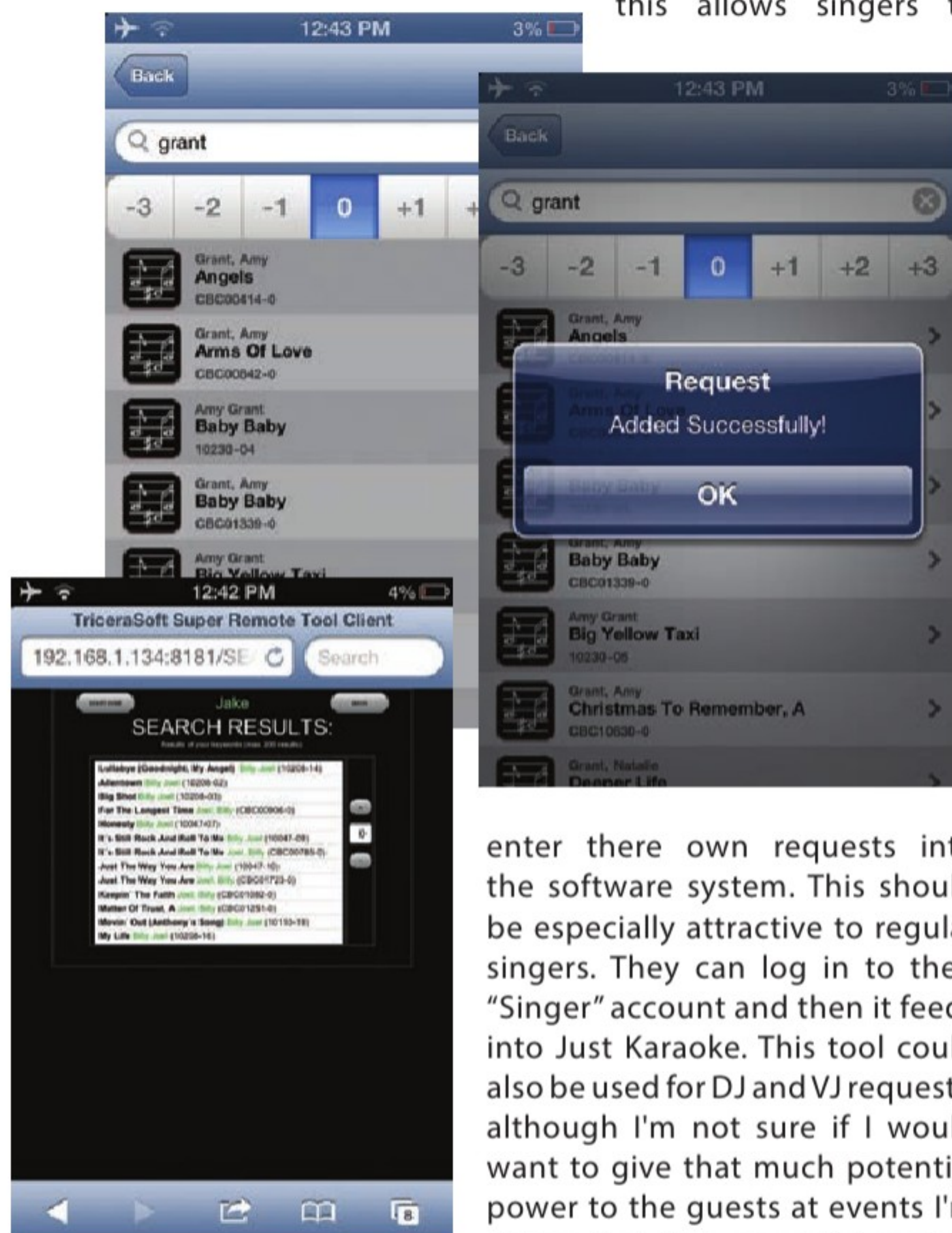
I started up the software, which found the database in Just Karaoke, and then it imported all the tracks. It was easy to customize the songbook by adding my logo. After marking on the songbook which laptop it belonged with I was good to go. The only issue I've run across is that some publishers have quotes around different database fields, and use differing punctua-



tion. That's a problem with the music, not the Just Karaoke or Tricerasoft Song Book Creator. But once I corrected it in Just Karaoke's listings, everything echoed through to the song books just fine. I ended up with nicely formatted artist and title-based songbooks all ready for requests.

## NEWFANGLED TOOL

The Super Remote Request Tool software makes life even easier for the KJ. Rather than always taking manual requests, this allows singers to



enter their own requests into the software system. This should be especially attractive to regular singers. They can log in to their "Singer" account and then it feeds into Just Karaoke. This tool could also be used for DJ and VJ requests, although I'm not sure if I would want to give that much potential power to the guests at events I'm doing. But this powerful system

makes perfect sense at regular weekly karaoke jobs.

Getting the Super Remote Request Tool up and running was pretty simple. First is the setup from within Just Karaoke, which contains the server that supports the system. Then I downloaded the client app and tested from a normal web browser. There is a helpful how-to video at the Super Remote Request system website that made it easy to configure it to work from the main karaoke laptop, my iMac, my smartphone browser and from the iSwiftRequest app.

## MAKING KARAOKE EASY

TriceraSoft's suite of karaoke products has been just what my company needed, to breathe new life into our karaoke service option. It seems poised to help us gain a bigger share of the karaoke market in our area. What makes it easy is the comprehensive system: from configuring the apps and licensing, to importing songs we already owned, to buying more through the download site, setting up smartphone requests and making songbooks, to actual KJing, it is one smooth system.

[www.tricerasoft.com](http://www.tricerasoft.com)

# TRUSST® Is Just Right

THE TRUSST® ARCH KIT FITS THE DJ NICHE NICELY

By Marc Andrews

Sometimes you find a product that fits a niche perfectly that hasn't been served as well for a while; it's exactly what you needed. Over the years I have "graduated" from big tripods with T-bars and multiple arms that can hold four PAR can lights and three or four effect lights, to ladder-style trussing that is supported by two of those same lighting tripods, and then have jumped up to the full-sized one-foot-square truss offered by several companies in the DJ industry, including Chauvet. But I haven't found anything well-placed between those last two levels, until now.

The TRUSST® Arch Kit is a 35mm truss system, which provides a middle ground between commonly used 50mm and 15mm truss systems, and it is exactly what many DJs need. This truss is perfect for hanging and mounting six to twelve LED lighting effects well above the DJ stand at an average school dance. While I'm not a



fan of trussing or any heavy lighting at wedding receptions, for those DJs who do use it, this would be a good alternative to using full sized trussing. The system will hold up to 660 lbs. when evenly distributed; I've only needed about 100 pounds of traditional lighting to fully cover the gigs where I've used this system.

Another great capacity of the TRUSST Arch Kit is that it can also be set up easily by just one person, without the need for a spotter, or even a hammer. Disassembly after the gig is even quicker. It comes with pre-labeled connections for its intended arch configuration and quick release pins that go into all of the connections, except the connection from the base pieces with the primary uprights. It is worth noting that this size of trussing requires different clamps than most tripods or larger truss systems. Chauvet offers the CLP-35HC to fill this need.

I would definitely recommend investing in the CHS-Arch VIP gear bag that is sold separately, to take care of the truss system. Although the Arch Kit is rugged, it still needs some protection to preserve its beautiful finish during transport.

More information on this truss system and its cousin the Goal Post Kit can be found at the TRUSST website.

[www.trusst.com](http://www.trusst.com)



# Is DMX Worth It?

WHY FULL LIGHTING CONTROL IS THE RIGHT WAY TO GO

By Arnoldo Offermann

**A**s DJs, we rightfully place a huge priority of the music we play, how we play it, and how we entertain the crowd in between. However, we bring lighting because it adds a visual appeal to the music we play. It's amazing to think how much lighting has progressed over the past few years. While "plug & pray" lighting rigs are still seen today (nothing wrong with that as long as it looks clean), many DJs

have jumped into the arena of full-on mobile event production, thanks to large lighting arsenals. And while the technology makes it easy to let the lighting "do its own thing" automatically, after a while, these lights need to be tamed quite a bit; we wouldn't trust our computers to pick our music for us, so why trust a light to do the same? You need control, and before you guys lose your mind (up in here, up in here)...you need DMX!

If you're not aware of DMX control, it's a digital protocol that controls lighting, to put it as briefly as possible. I don't want to delve into how and why it works, as there's plenty of great resources out there, such as Ben Stowe's video series. Instead, I want to talk about why you should use DMX, what solution works best, and when.

## ASSUME CONTROL OF THE ROOM

I personally choose to use some form of DMX control on my lights when the client requests full control of scenes, and of course has a budget for a lighting tech to run control of those lights (or sometimes I run it in between songs). By scenes, I literally mean the theatrical version of the word; at a wedding we typically have the following scenes:

- Guests walking in
- Grand Intro
- Special Dances
- Dinner and toasts
- Formalities
- Dancing

For example, I may have the lights with all white as guests walk in and then switch to a fun chase sequence as I do the introductions. This would quickly cut to one of their wedding colors for the first dance.

Though I could easily use a light that has a remote control option and thus allow a real quick solution, this isn't always the best solution. For weddings where lighting is a big priority, a remote control allowing quick and dirty cuts from scene to scene will not do. Let's take the same scenario above, but

explain what would be done with proper DMX programming. I am still talking strictly floods, but we'll go from there.

Guests walk in and the entire room is lit up in pure white. Nothing special about this and shouldn't be. However, I can choose to do a cool or warm white based on the overall season and colors picked. We get ready for the grand intro and the lights dim. Guests grab their seats as the music begins, and the lighting comes back up pulsing to the beat of the song, building up in intensity and speed as we get to the main event. Suddenly the pulsating lights change to only the wedding colors as we introduce the bride and groom. The crowd cheers as they take their steps toward their first dance.

This was a very simple three scene change which looks incredible with DMX





Photo by Arnoldo Offermann

control. What happens if we add other fixtures to the above scenario? Let's take a "look"...

Guests walk in and the entire room is lit up in pure white. We get ready for the grand intro and the lights dim. Suddenly, in the center of the room, their wedding monogram highlights the dance floor as the MC welcomes the guests to an extraordinary night. Cheers erupt as two moving heads focus a spotlight on the entrance door and four other movers begin to circle the room. The music begins and the floods pulse to the beat of the song. The floods dim off and only the spots and gobo are on as the bride and groom walk in. The crowd cheers as they step toward their first dance, and the movers rotate around them while the floods dim to a subtle color

that tints the room just right.

Once you do this a couple of time and get video of it, you'll notice a better reaction out of brides during sales meetings, as you talk about lighting. Using DMX, I can take the same lighting that I use for a high-energy school dance and create a romantic atmosphere for a bride who doesn't want ANY club ambiance at her wedding at all. Best of all, the time I take for DMX programming isn't free—it's all built into the final cost. On bigger packages, we can create really custom scenes and create something truly spectacular.

Of course, as the event gets bigger the choice of DMX really becomes obvious. However, when does it make sense NOT to go full-on DMX?

For the events we do, our DMX controller requires a second person. While I *could* DJ and run our system, I prefer to focus on one thing and make it amazing; thus a lighting tech always comes with me. However, let's say I have a Sweet 16 with a smaller budget. I could sell a simple light show with a tech, or more lighting without a tech. Many choose the latter, despite the limitations of no DMX. However, this doesn't mean I just let a bunch of lights run all night. More and more lighting is coming out with small remote controls or even a small DMX board (wireless) to run color floods. Using these two tools, I can create an exciting show that still adds visual appeal to my mix without needing a tech.

The same applies for uplighting. For that, I use my small ADJ RGB8WC WiFLY board and I have enough control of the uplighting to create plenty of scenes with the preset buttons. It won't give me as much control as the big board, or even a laptop with control software, but it provides a nice bang for the buck. Should my client want more control, we discuss better control options.

However, don't do like we did and keep stepping up. We started with a hardware board, hated it and moved to entry-level software then stepped up to a fully-featured solution. Turns out the latter was *easier* to program and would've made life easier from the get-go. Download as many free demos as possible and watch YouTube videos made by users on various software. You'll find something that suits your style and you'll be programming like a pro soon enough! Get ready to light up some new possibilities for your business and brighten your bottom line! **MB**



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# The Importance of Back-Up Gear

**DON'T WAIT TILL YOU CRASH AND BURN TO LEARN THE LESSON**

By Richard McCoy



**T**hose of us who've been in the DJ business for a long time (I've racked up 45 years), understand the importance of having backup equipment available when it's really needed. Also, from my experience as an engineer, I believe that Murphy's Law will prevail whenever a DJ doesn't have backup equipment ready. Things **WILL** go wrong; gear **WILL** malfunction.

There is no more embarrassing moment that a DJ can face than having an equipment failure during a performance. Your customer and audience don't really care what the problem is, they only want your performance to continue. Equipment failures may be the result of bad connectors, spilled liquids, dropped equipment, power surges, bad hard disc or some unknown problem. Whatever the problem, the show must go on.

Having backup equipment is like purchasing automobile insurance. You hate paying the money, but if you ever need it, you're really glad you have it. The use and amount of backup equipment is determined by experience, budget and available transportation space. A DJ is not usually aware of the importance of carrying backup equipment until they have experienced an equipment failure in the middle of a show. Only then, do many realize the true value of a backup. The school of hard knocks is the best teacher and there is no substitute for experience.

In a recent unscientific survey of the DJs in my state, I've

collected some info that I think provides a good picture of what most DJs think about backup equipment. Those DJs who have been in the business for a long time or who have experienced equipment failures have a better understanding of the necessity for backup equipment. Some DJs even carry three backups. New DJs in the business with small budgets and limited experience do not see the need or anticipate the requirement for backup equipment. It appears that budget is the main contributing factor to what and how much, if any, backup equipment a DJ may have available. Some may only have an amplifier, a speaker or CD player for emergencies. Others would have a second complete system and/or all the individual components necessary to replace any failed component in the primary system (see image).

While I have not suffered from a truly major equipment failure in 40 years, I still carry a complete emergency replacement system, just in case. This may cost me extra money, but in the long run, it's worth it. If I ever have a requirement for an emergency backup system, I'm ready and can have an operational system up and running in a few minutes. Most customers and clients will have patience when there's an equipment failure, as long as it does not delay their performance too long, and if there is a replacement unit or system available. Not being able to continue a performance due to gear failure is simply not acceptable!

## HOW TO BUILD A BACKUP

Depending upon the style and the type of media used in your primary system (vinyl, CD or computer), your backup system should match the formats that best suit your style. The main components of a backup system should include: media player, power amplifier (or powered speakers), microphone and mixer. These components may not be as versatile or functionally the same as your primary system but they will provide your audience with music and entertainment under adverse circumstances.

To ensure a quick and easy migration to your backup system, I suggest that you have a complete system ready to go in a self-contained enclosure that only one plug in to power up. This will save time and will make you look like a hero to your clients. If you



*Richard has been an electronics hardware/software engineer in Silicon Valley for over 45 years, and is listed on several patents. During that same time, he has also operated as a mobile DJ, doing more than 4000 shows. Richard has contributed to the design of chips, graphics cards, audio and video systems, computers, and even satellites, as well as DJ lighting and sound equipment, while working for companies like Fairchild, Acer and Atari.*



are a vinyl or CD-only DJ, then your library should be able to sustain you for the rest of your performance. If you rely heavily upon your computer library for music, it is best to have an extra external hard drive with all your music on it.

For some, an "all-in-one" unit might be the perfect solution. For a while now, Numark has made a very nice and functional complete system that work great right out of the box. The CDMIX line provides a dual CD player, mixer, mic and line input all in one unit. One of the latest models, the iCDMIX2, also features a dock that allows you to play music from a number of different Apple iPod models. It will even run on 12v DC (car battery). At a street price typically under \$300, this unit is also quite affordable.

This unit is also great for small venues; which leads me to mention one bonus of maintaining a backup system. The size of the system may make it just right for small function where a large primary system would be overkill. So you may be able to get a bigger return on your back-up gear investment than it might



appear at first glance.

Even though I'm not a supporter of laptop DJing in general, I do carry one as part of my emergency backup system. With the media content and software on the laptop, I am confident that I can continue to provide my clients with a superior show with only a small delay, as I boot up and login. On the other hand, my rack mount computer allows me to continue and/or "hot swap" a hard drive without any interference or disruption in my performance.

I can also change video and sound outputs if necessary. This way, the client will never even know that I've experienced a problem.

Although any back-up solution requires an extra expense that many DJs are unwilling to pay, owning a backup system is not a luxury but a necessity for true professionals. The example above shows what can be provided for just a few dollars. Whatever the size you can manage for an emergency system, the investment in this kind of "insurance policy" is well worth it! **MB**

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# How to Safely Navigate the New Vehicle Tax Laws

## CAREFULLY AND LEGITIMATELY REDUCING BUSINESS VEHICLE COSTS

By Mark E. Battersby

**T**he owners and operators of many mobile entertainment businesses will have to live and, in many cases, suffer, with today's tax laws—especially the deduction limits for cars, vans and SUVs. That's right: Those purchasing or leasing a vehicle during 2013, whether for use in the mobile entertainment business, by the business, or for use by the owner and/or key employees, face severely limited depreciation deductions—restrictions that can substantially increase the out-of-pocket cost of acquiring any business vehicle.

Fortunately, every DJ, VJ and KJ who uses a car, truck or van in their mobile entertainment business—for sales calls, transporting equipment, or other functions—may be able to write off its purchase price in the year it is first used for business purposes. Or, in some cases, the operation may be limited to writing off only a few thousand dollars a year for several years. The tax treatment depends on the size of the vehicle and whether it's suitable for personal as well as business use.

### SIMPLY STANDARD

A simplified standard mileage allowance deduction replaces separate deductions for lease payments (or depreciation if the car is purchased), maintenance, repairs, tires, gas and oil, insurance and license and registration fees. Unfortunately, the standard mileage rate may not be used if a Code Section 179, first-year expensing election was claimed for the auto, or if the vehicle was depreciated. Also, under the current rules, the standard mileage rate can't be used to compute the deductible expenses if five or more autos are owned or leased by a mobile entertainment business and used simultaneously (such as in a fleet).

While using the standard mileage rate is easier for

record keeping, a larger deduction may result using the actual cost method. And don't forget use of the standard mileage allowance prevents a mobile entertainer from claiming regular MACRS depreciation deductions (subject to the luxury auto dollar caps) for the auto in later years.

### NOT PEOPLE-FRIENDLY

Trucks (including SUVs) and vans that are configured in such a way that they can be used only minimally for personal purposes, are not usually subject to the dollar limits that apply to passenger vehicles weighing no more than 6,000 pounds. These trucks and vans are referred to as "qualified non-personal use vehicles."

Modifications likely to render a truck or van as a qualified non-personal use vehicle include having a front bench for seating, permanent shelving that fills the cargo area and advertising or a company name printed on the side.

### LUXURY CAR WRITE-OFFS

Expenses related to the use of a car, van, pickup, or panel truck for business purposes can, of course, be deducted by the operation as "transportation" expenses if: the vehicle is used more than 50% of the time for business purposes; isn't classed as "listed property;" and its use doesn't require it be treated as a "fringe benefit" to the business's owner or key employees.

Congress decided years ago that taxpayers should not have to subsidize extravagant vehicles used by business. To prevent that, the law squeezes otherwise allowable depreciation deductions for "luxury cars." But don't think Rolls Royce or Ferrari. Congress has a much less extravagant view of luxury. For 2013, the maximum first-year depreciation write-off for a new (not used car) that costs over \$15,300 is \$11,160. For a used car, the maximum first-year write-off for 2013 is a much lower \$3,160. (These figures assume 100% business use.)

### THE STRATEGIES OF CHANGE

Under the American Taxpayer Relief Act (the so-called "Fiscal Cliff" taxes), an \$8,000 increase in the first-year depreciation cap for vehicles on which bonus depreciation is claimed remains unchanged and continues to apply to vehicles placed in service in 2013.

Taking into account the \$8,000 increase, if bonus depreciation is claimed, the first-year depreciation limit on luxury automobiles first put into use during the 2013 is, as mentioned, \$11,160 for passenger automobiles, and \$11,360 for trucks and vans.

If a vehicle does not qualify for bonus depreciation (e.g., a used vehicle is purchased or the business opts out of bonus depreciation), the first-year cap is \$3,160 for passenger cars, and \$3,160 for qualifying trucks and vans.

Larger vehicles, such as trucks or tractor-trailers are, of course, treated differently for tax purposes. Generally however, in order to claim a tax deduction for business use of a car or truck, a mobile entertainment business must have "ordinary and necessary" costs related to business usage.

More good news if the vehicle is leased—the lease inclusion tables do not apply if the weight limits are



exceeded. So, the DJ, VJ or KJ can write off the entire lease cost (at the business use percentage) and does not have to reduce lease payments by the yearly lease inclusion limitation.

### BIGGER VEHICLES, BIGGER WRITE-OFFS

In general, there are two ways to recover the cost of a truck more quickly than the usual depreciation recovery period—if the truck is more than 6,000 pounds. The first is called a Section 179 deduction.

Section 179 of the tax law allows the mobile entertainment operation to expense and immediately write-off the cost of business property instead of taking the depreciation write-off. To qualify for this deduction, business use of the property must be more than 50 percent.

There are both dollar and business income limitations on the Section 179 amount that can be deducted for 2013. The maximum amount that can be elected as a Section 179 expense is \$500,000. The amount of business income limits the amount that can be deducted each year to the lesser of the taxable income generated from the business or \$500,000.

### SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES (SUVS) AND PICK-UPS

Sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and pick-up trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) in excess of 6,000 pounds are exempt from the luxury car depreciation caps. However, no more than \$25,000 of the cost of an SUV with a GVWR in excess of 6,000 pounds or a pick-up truck in excess of 6,000 GVWR with a bed length of less than six feet may be expensed under the Section 179, first-year expensing rules.

If the 50-percent bonus depreciation applies, a DJ business may treat as an immediately deductible “expense” as much as \$25,000 of the cost under Section 179. It may also claim a 50-percent bonus depreciation deduction on the cost as reduced by the Section 179 allowance. Then a regular first-year depreciation deduction equal to 20% of the cost (reduced by the Section 179 deduction and the 50% bonus allowance) is claimed—assuming the 200% declining-balance method and half-year convention are used to depreciate the vehicle, of course.

### PERSONAL USAGE AND THE END

An employer must treat an employee’s personal use of any employer-provided auto as fringe benefit income that can be valued using any one of several methods. One of the permitted methods allows an employer to value personal use at the mileage allowance rate (56.5 cents per mile for 2013).

A mobile entertainment business that leases a business vehicle can deduct the business use part of the lease payment. If business use is 100%, the full lease amount is deductible. So that lessees can’t avoid the effect of the luxury auto limits, however, they must include a certain amount in income during each year of the lease to partially offset the lease deduction.

If the DJ, VJ or KJ stops using the truck for business purposes, or if the business purpose drops to 50 percent or less, the rules require “recapture” of some of the benefits received. The recaptured amount or amount paid back is the

amount of the excess earlier deduction. In other words, the amount taken in excess of what would have been allowed had the vehicle been depreciated using the straight-line method of depreciation over a specific time frame (in the case of a truck, five years).

### ALL-IMPORTANT RECORDS

To prove eligibility to deduct car and truck expenses, every mobile entertainer should keep a mileage log. A mileage log should contain the date of each tax-deductible trip made, show how many miles were driven, and for what purpose. The total number of miles driven for the year is also a factor, so it would be a good idea to indicate each vehicle’s odometer reading on the first of each year.

It is also important to track vehicle expenses. In addition to documenting the use of the vehicle, an expense record gives every DJ, VJ and KJ the option of deducting the actual expenses where the standard deduction would not result in a lower tax bill.

Whether vehicles play a role in the operation of the mobile entertainment business, are used by the business, or are provided by the business for use by owners, shareholders or key employees, our tax rules can help offset the expenses. Guidance by a qualified professional is, however, strongly recommended especially when it comes to the deduction limits imposed on recovering the cost of those vehicles. **MB**

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# 10 Disastrous Wedding Blog Mistakes

DON'T MISS THE MARK WITH THESE BLOGGING BLUNDERS

By Stephanie Padovani



**B**logging is a powerful strategy for attracting targeted website visitors, establishing your value, networking with other businesses and more. When it comes to your DJ business, it's an essential component of getting found online. However, blogging only works if you do it right. Avoid these mistakes to stay on track...

## #1: BLOGGING FOR YOURSELF INSTEAD OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM

DJs are passionate about the latest music, lighting and equipment. But what are newly engaged couples interested in? Probably not the coolest new gobo. Your blog posts should be written 100% for your target couples. Nix the equipment photos and lighting reviews.

This doesn't mean you can't include the topics you love. Just make sure your posts are written first and foremost for your ideal couples. Topics brides drool over include: unique

ideas, wedding inspiration, real weddings, reviews and "how-to" advice.

## #2: WRITING GENERAL INSTEAD OF LOCAL

If you're writing about wedding planning tips, advice and inspiration, you're on the right track. That's the stuff brides love. But if you're writing only about general wedding topics such as wedding entertainment, first dance songs and toast ideas, you're missing out on leads. It's much harder to rank for these popular keyword phrases on Google, and the visitors you attract will be from all over the country.

To focus your search results, write about local wedding topics to attract website visitors who can turn into real leads. Include the names of local cities, counties and venues to attract the couples searching for information about them.



*Stephanie Padovani is a blogger, writer, wedding entertainer and business coach. She and her husband Jeff are the dynamic husband-wife duo behind Book More Brides, the #1 online resource for transformational marketing strategies for the wedding industry. Visit BookMoreBrides.com to be entertained and empowered with low cost, effective marketing strategies and powerful "anti-price shopper" communication techniques that don't require sleazy sales tactics or fighting to get the price you deserve.*

## #3: POORLY WRITTEN TITLES

The title of your blog post is the most important thing about it. Why? Because that's what makes a visitor decide if it's worth reading. Think about the headlines that grab your attention. What do they have in common? Write titles for your posts that are interesting, benefit-oriented and easy to understand.

## #4: BLOGGING FOR SEARCH ENGINES INSTEAD OF CLIENTS

If your blog post is so stuffed with keyword phrases that it sounds awkward when read aloud, you're guilty of this mistake. Yes, it's important to include those local keyword phrases (San Francisco DJ, Essex County wedding, etc.), but only when it's appropriate and only when it makes sense to real people. Cramming these phrases unnaturally into your content not only drives couples away. It can also get you punished by Google.

## #5: NOT BLOGGING CONSISTENTLY

Blogging only works when you do it regularly. There's nothing worse than potential clients stumbling across your



blog that's been dead for six months. It immediately makes the web searcher wonder if your business is actually operating.

Add new posts two or three times per week on a consistent basis for real results. Don't be put off by the thought of hitting this number week after week; you can write extra posts ahead of time to post during weeks when you are extra-busy or on vacation.

#### #6: FORGETTING A CALL TO ACTION

A bride lands on your blog and loves your content. Great! But what does she do next? In most cases, she leaves and never comes back. That's because most blogs are missing a prominent call to action. A "call to action" is attention-getting text or a button that tells the bride exactly what to do next, like "Contact Me" or "Click Here." Tell them what to do and give them a good reason to do it. Without a call to action, you're losing leads.

#### #7: NOT CONNECTING YOUR BLOG TO YOUR WEBSITE

This mistake is common with blogs hosted with Wordpress.com or Blogger.com. When a visitor lands on your website homepage and clicks on the blog menu, they are taken to your blog. So far, so good. But what about the visitors who land on a blog post first?

Every page of your blog must have a prominent link to your website, along with your contact information, so that potential clients have an easy way find out more about you.

#### #8: MISSING IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

A great blog post is enhanced by video and images, but if they aren't tagged with relevant keyword phrases, you're missing out on website visitors. The search engines can't identify the contents of photos (yet) so they rely on the image title and description to determine what it's about. Take an extra minute to complete every image description and add relevant keywords before inserting it in your post.

#### #9: MISSING SOCIAL SHARE BUTTONS

It's increasingly important to have your website and blog shared on social media if you want to be found online. Get more people to share, like and tweet your articles by making it easy for them. Add social share buttons to every post on your blog. There are hundreds of plugins you can install so that couples can share your content with one click.

#### #10: AN INVITATION TO "SIGN UP FOR MY EMAIL LIST!"

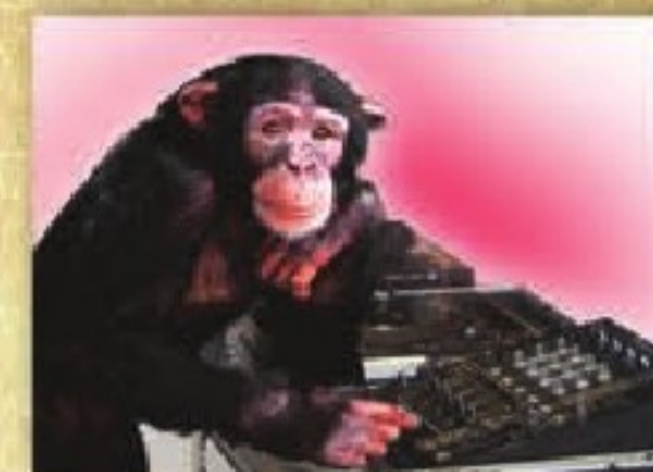
Including a form on your blog to capture email leads is an excellent idea, but if your call to action is, "Subscribe to my email list!" you're not going to get much of a response. Does anyone really want more email these days? Not likely.

If you want people to sign up for your email list, offer them a free report like "The 7 Songs You Should Never Play at the Wedding" or a video called, "The #1 Regret Couples Have After the Wedding." A compelling offer means you'll get more people signing up, and you'll book more weddings as a result.

These wedding blog mistakes are common, but easily preventable. Correct them and you'll be sure to attract more targeted leads for your DJ business. **MB**

## The Questions Spin...

Was a monkey once trained to be a Mobile DJ?



Who was widely acclaimed as the world's first Mobile DJ but after his death in 2011 was exposed for his criminal life?

Will the Soho section of New York City be the future site of the Mobile DJ Museum?



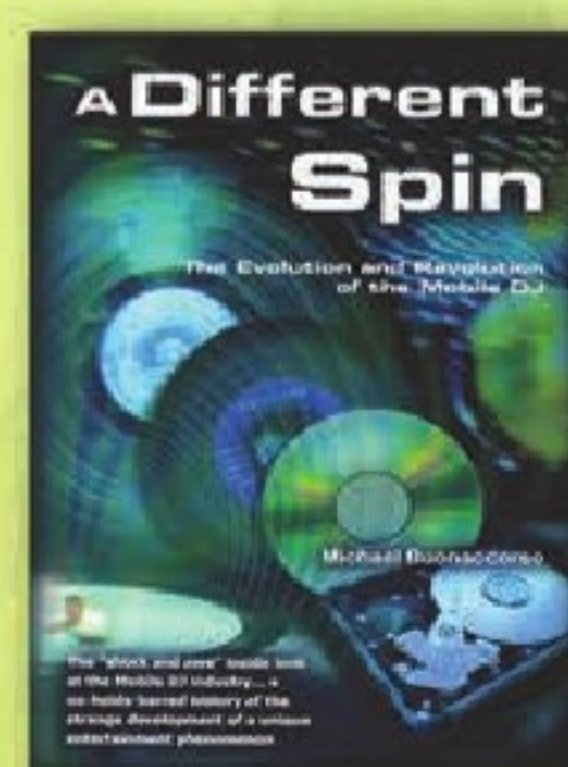
Who developed a line of DJ speakers in red, yellow, purple, and two shades of blue?

In 1997, how did the release of the motion picture *Titanic* spur a DJ craze? Or did it?



Just who was Mobile Beat's "Dr." Shock Jock" and what did he say to cause such a controversy?

What was the largest scandal ever involving Mobile Beat Magazine, and who were the players?



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## Handing Down the Business

Dear Dave,

*I run my own business, and my son works with me. Our wives help out with things too. I'd like to retire in a couple of years and have him take over the company. The business has a \$45,000 yearly net profit, and my son makes up to \$55,000 a year. For the transfer, he would still use my building for the short term, but buy the tools and equipment he wanted and sell the rest. What's the best way to make this transition?*

- Matt

Dear Matt,

Let's say he gives you \$50,000 for the tools and stuff within a year. If he owned the business, he'd have extra income in addition to his salary. I don't think that's an unreasonable deal at all. He'd make \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year as the sole owner between his income and the profit. If he gave you \$50,000 out of the first year's business, even if he had a slim year, it's a pretty good deal.

Make sure, too, that you clearly define his role in using your shop. If you just say he can use it until he needs to move, there's a chance you'll look up 10 years later and find him there. "Short term" should be clearly defined, fair and put down on paper. If there's a major problem with the business or the economy, you can always work that out later. But there needs to be a definite agreement and schedule for when the business and everything connected to it is his.

It's very important for you guys to be on the same page and in total agreement with this situation. Communication is absolutely vital when family works together or tries to come to terms on an important issue. Adding the wives to the negotiation would be a really good idea too. There will always be an emotional attachment to this business for you and your wife, even after you've retired and you guys are no longer part of the everyday workings. Plus, you want to ensure that your son and daughter-in-law feel good about the arrangement so that there are no hard feelings later.

So talk it out and make sure everyone feels the terms are fair. Then put your stamp on it and move forward!

- Dave

Dave Ramsey is America's trusted voice on money and business. He's authored four New York Times best-selling books **Financial Peace**, **More Than Enough**, **The Total Money Makeover** and **EntreLeadership**. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 5 million listeners each week on more than 500 radio stations. Follow Dave on Twitter at @DaveRamsey and on the web at [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com).



## Dave Says...

By Dave Ramsey

## Cultivating Customers

Dear Dave,

*I have several large customers. These customers are a big enough part of my business that if I lost one it would have a significant impact on my bottom line. Should I be trying to grow them, or would my time be better spent prospecting and adding new customers?*

- Ryan

Dear Ryan,

I think you should be doing both. You need to have lots and lots of new customers, so that while they become a bigger part of your world, it would become less impactful financially if one suddenly went away. You never want to have a customer situation where the tail is wagging the dog. As a business owner, you don't want a customer that's so big, such a huge part of your world, that it would devastate you financially if the relationship ended. That puts you into a situation that's based in fear, not in serving.

There's nothing wrong with someone being an important percentage of your business world. I have two advertisers who have been with my company and our radio show for many years. In the old days, the ad revenue those two companies alone generated was a huge deal to us. Now, we collect a lot more ad revenue from them than we did back then, which means we've helped them grow their businesses significantly. Meanwhile, our business has grown substantially. So even though these guys bring in four or five times the revenue they did back then, we've grown significantly in other areas. This has made them a smaller percentage of our world.

That's what I mean when I say the answer is both. You want your customers to be successful, but you also want to do very well so you're not quite as dependent on any single one of them as you go along.

- Dave

**MB**



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# Walk In Empty-Headed...Walk Out Empty-Handed

HOW MUCH OF YOUR PRESENTATION IS "STANDARD?"

By Jeffrey Gitomer

**W**hether you sell a product or service, whether it's simple or sophisticated, how much (what percentage) of your presentation is the way you "usually" present it? How much is void of personalization? Void of customization? Void of interaction? And how much is really all about you?

What kind of presentation do you think your prospect wants?

- They want to know what the value is to THEM.
- They want to know how this fits into THEIR business or life.
- They want to know how THEY benefit.
- They want to know how THEY win.
- They want to know how THEY produce.
- They want to know how it affects THEM.
- They want to know how THEY profit.
- They want to know how easy it will be put to use in THEIR environment.

And NONE of those elements exist in your standard (canned) presentation, you say? Rats. Why are you giving a "we-we" presentation (really all about you and how great you are), when the customer only wants a presentation in terms of them?

Here's the Realty: When you walk in empty-headed, you walk out empty-handed.

Idea: Take all the boring crap you were going to say to the customer, and send it to them in an email saying, "Here's my presentation for the part you could find on Google or on our website, so that when we're together I don't bore you. Rather, I'll be prepared to give you ideas that lead to (state how they win). Fair enough?" Now you're a real salesperson. Now you're forced to go in with ideas and information about THEM that they can use for their own productivity, enjoyment, use, and profit.

And you now have a better than 50% chance of making the sale.

Caution: Unless your presentation is customized and personalized for the customer AND in favor of the customer, there

will be a disconnect. Their dominant thought will be, "this guy doesn't understand me and/or my business."

Here are some keys to understanding whose favor your presentation is geared toward:

## WE-WE...

- Statements about you that boast rather than prove.
- Unfavorable statements about the competition.
- Comparing yourself to the competition.
- Self-serving questions. "What do you know about us?"
- Qualifying questions about who decides, budget, or payment.
- Non-specific testimonials that praise you, but give no reason why.
- Excuses about why you don't have Twitter activity or a YouTube channel (they searched for it before you arrived).
- No social media recommendations from customers.

## THEM...

- Questions about THEM that reveal their history, their situation, and their motives—their past experience, their wisdom, their opinion. True engagement.
- Testimonials that overcome specific objections—price and quality.
- Any third-party media that supports you or your product—articles or interviews.
- Great (current) social media presence (your reputation that helps put the buyer at ease rather than on guard), including direct interaction with customers.
- Ideas you created that they can use. Proof you did your "homework."

Key Point of Understanding: Features are about you and benefits are in the middle. They can be stated either way. But value is about them. And value, customer-perceived value, needs to be the focus of a "them-based" presentation.

Warning: Don't be defensive. I can hear you telling me that you give a customized presentation. I can hear you telling me that you're different than all the other people on the planet. And I can hear you telling me that customers love your presentation, and all about the fact you can close three out of four people once you get in front of them.

I hope you can hear me say, "That's a bunch of crap!"

Here's how to measure your customization reality:

1 - Amount of time spent on pre-call research. How well do you know the person and the company you are visiting?

2 - The two great ideas you are walking in the door with that will benefit them whether they buy or not.

3 - The variations you made in your presentation that adapt to their company, their present situation, their needs, their productivity, and their success.

3.5 - Your knowledge of the customer's buying motives are as good or greater than your selling skills.

Them-based sales presentations are the most difficult of all. Marketing departments have no concept of them, and most salespeople aren't willing to do the work to prepare them.

That's great news for the 5% of salespeople who are willing. They're easy to identify. They're always the highest performers and the highest earners. **MB**

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of twelve best-selling books, including *The Sales Bible* and *The Little Red Book of Selling*. He just published two new sales books, available exclusively on Amazon's Kindle: *Win Now!* and *The Sale Re-Defined*. They will change the way you think and sell. His website, [www.gitomer.com](http://www.gitomer.com), will lead you to more information about training and seminars, or email him personally at [salesman@gitomer.com](mailto:salesman@gitomer.com).



# The Human Element

## INTEGRATING YOUR TEAM AND YOUR BUSINESS SYSTEMS

By John Stiernberg

**W**hen business people think of systems integration, they often default to computer systems or unified communications (laptop, mobile phone, tablet all in sync for phone, conferencing, text and e-mail). While all of that is important, integration of the people and functions of your mobile entertainment is as critical as having the right tools.

Your business systems include sales, marketing, finance, and operations—much more than just showing up for the gig. It's essential to coordinate who does what, when, and why. How can you successfully integrate your business systems? Do you need to hire an in-house operations manager? Can't we just let the mythical Cloud (like apps and Google Docs) handle everything? This article addresses these issues and recommends three action tips for success.

### THE VALUE OF INTEGRATED BUSINESS SYSTEMS

Whether you are a one-person mobile entertainment company or a multi-rig firm with office personnel, you need an integrated approach to business operations. The following are examples of the elements of the system:

- The business vocabulary or jargon that everyone uses
- The financial chart of accounts with definitions of what each item includes
- Computer software, including current application programs that are compatible throughout the team
- Schedules that sync in real time as things change
- Marketing and promotion that actually supports your sales initiatives and accurately represents your brand

The theme here is that an integrated business system takes all aspects of your operations into account in a way that prevents problems, optimizes team efficiency, and anticipates future growth. Your company's policies, procedures, and tools need to be shareable, upgradable, and affordable.

### COMMON PITFALLS

These things do not "take care of themselves." Too many DJs delegate work to friends, family, or vendors (such as publicist, accountant, or webmaster) without considering the operational implications. Here are examples of the mistakes that mobile entertainers make unwittingly:

1. Generic accounting software. Does QuickBooks Pro have a DJ template? Does your bookkeeper or accountant understand your business enough to know what travel, equipment purchases, or promotion you do are tax deductible?
2. Forgetting to update online calendars. Yes, things change rapidly. It's your responsibility to make sure that your team, family, and clients know where you are going to be at any time. Do your people have access to your schedule online or otherwise? Do you keep it up to date?
3. Sloppy file management. Are all your contracts in the same folder on your computer or office file cabinet? Which other people need access to the files? Are there hard or soft copy backups?
4. One checkbook for business and personal expenses. Some solo entertainers still use one bank account for everything. Ouch! Do you

maintain clear separation between your business and your personal life?

5. Too many non-essential apps. While the free or inexpensive business applications (apps) that are available for mobile phones and tablet computers are handy, it's easy to lose track of the updates, especially with multiple team members. Who in your organization determines which apps are right for your business? Are they real tools or gimmicky toys?

Rule of Thumb: Any one of the above is a potential problem. If you are weak or unsure in two or more areas, it's time to make business systems integration a high priority.

### INTEGRATING YOUR BUSINESS

While your live show may be great, it is vital that your back-of-house business systems are equally strong. Getting the business done on time, efficiently, and profitably is essential for long-term success—and for helping you sleep comfortably knowing things are in order. Here are three suggestions for building an integrated business operation:

- Action Tip 1. Design an integrated business system. Set objectives in the areas described above, whether they are in place now or not. Determine where you need to be by this time next year as your company grows.
- Action Tip 2: Do an evaluation of your current business systems. Take a hard look at how you operate and compare it to your long-term system design. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and missing links. Involve your team in the evaluation—they likely see things differently and maybe even better than you do.
- Action Tip 3. Create an operational development plan. Get costs of any tools or support services that you need. Put them in priority order so that implementation is affordable and expedient. Take some pressure off of yourself by recognizing that most fixes are likely to be simple.

### HERE'S THE POINT...

Your business is an integrated system of functions and tools. There is an analogy to your sound system. You could have a great DJ mixer and speakers, but if your microphone gets lost or the battery for the wireless runs down, your audience suffers. Don't let your business shut down because you did not back up your computer or your team goes off on a tangent when they can't contact you.

Be sure to implement the Action Tips in sequence: 1) design an integrated business system, 2) do an evaluation of your current operations, and 3) create and implement an affordable operational development plan. You and your entire team will benefit from a unified and integrated approach to your business.

Next time we'll talk about making hiring decisions as your business grows. In the meantime, best wishes for success in mobile entertainment in 2013! **MB**



John Stiernberg is founder and principal consultant with Stiernberg Consulting ([www.stiernberg.com](http://www.stiernberg.com)). John has over 25 years experience in the music and entertainment technology field, and currently works with audio and music companies and others on strategic planning and market development. His book *Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters* is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at [john@stiernberg.com](mailto:john@stiernberg.com), or on LinkedIn and Facebook. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/JohnStiernberg>.



# BECAUSE YOUR SCHOOL DANCE BUSINESS SHOULDN'T SUCK

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## PLAY SOMETHING WE CAN DANCE TO

... Continued from page 14

freaky to have the laser touch my eye, the next few moments were pretty wild. The doctor told me to look at the laser, and as it did its medical cutting, I was actually experiencing an awesome light show. The only thing missing was some music by Pink Floyd to make it complete. Two weeks later when the left eye was operated on, I was actually looking forward to this part of the procedure. The final stage was inserting the new lens which took place in an adjoining room. From start to finish, this brief miracle of modern medicine took less than fifteen minutes from the time I was rolled into the laser room until I was back out to the prep area.

The follow-up exams during the next few weeks were in many ways the same type of eye exams that I had experienced since sixth grade. The kind of exam where the doctor places this large funky device over your eyes and begins to flip and spin lenses and asked you which is better, one or two? I have always suspected that this

procedure must be taught in one of the first classes all eye doctors take, perhaps in a class titled Eye Exams 102 (pronounced "one or two"). This has always been one of my favorite types of exams, since there is no need to study the night before in order to pass. When I was young, I kept waiting for the doctor to tell me whether or not I had the right answer when I replied with either my requested "one or two" response.

### TUNE ONE OR TUNE TWO?

If you have read my articles before, you already know that it sometimes takes me a while to finally relate my story to music. If you are a first time reader, you may have almost quit reading after the second paragraph or thought that you had picked up a medical journal by mistake. (Don't we all make that mistake sometimes?) But this experience actually led me to this issue's topic: deciding which version of a song is better—the first one or the second one. Many songs have been done by more than one artist and the original version may or may not be the most popular one today. In fact, the version by the second artist may be preferred by the majority of

people. Just as the choice in the doctor's office of which view is "better" is in the eye of the beholder (i.e. the patient), the choice of which tune is "better" is in the ear of the beholder (i.e. the client).

The chart for this issue shows songs that have been recorded by different artists, where both versions are still popular. In the first column is the original version and in the second column there is a popular version released later. Clearly there may be more than just two versions, but the chart only lists the two most popular. The version in italics is the one that is currently most requested based on our clients' requests. As you can see the original (number one) is not always the version that is the most popular according to research based on our clients' requests at our events. Often the most popular version is the "number two" rendition. So the lesson to remember is that it is important, when taking requests, to find out not only the name of the song but also the artist who sings it, when someone shouts out to you, "Play something we can dance to!" **MB**

## SCOOP: D:FINE HEADSET MIC

... Continued from page 40

but I've seen many people with their cable dangling, just waiting to get snagged on something. And it may seem like a tiny detail, but unlike other headsets I've used, the clip supplied with the d:fine was shaped and sized just right for my large, clumsy fingers, making it easy to mic myself up securely.

### I HEAR YOU LOUD AND CLEAR

Of course, all the great ergonomics and clever external features would mean nothing if the actual sound of the mic sucked. As I mentioned above, the market

is swelling with a tide of cheapo headsets that look the part but don't perform up to snuff. Admittedly, DPA mics don't feature the lowest prices around; but they have a reputation for being worth every penny. The fact that DPA headsets are a primary choice for Broadway sound techs should be one huge indicator of their quality.

Reputation aside, my personal tests of the d:fine proved to me that the DPA sound is superior. I used the headset in a number of different situations, with music playing behind me, while moving around, and with all other sound down so all that was heard was the voice coming through the mic. In every case, the d:fine's sound was crisp,

clear and without distortion or any detectable inherent noise.

The high quality of the d:fine's sound leads me back to what I said at the outset: a headset mic, and this one in particular, makes it possible, even essential to use your normal speaking voice rather than employ the shouting style I see so many interactive DJs use. If you want to a) annoy the audience less, b) sound as professional as possible, and c) save your vocal cords and extend your career as a vocal artist, then the d:fine dual-ear headset mic from DPA would be a perfect addition to your current wireless mic setup. **MB**



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# The Power of Goals

IS THE END RESULT WORTH THE RISK OR REPERCUSSIONS?

By Jason Weldon



**I** have always wondered why I don't act on all the ideas or concepts I come up with in my head. I think of an easy five things a day that have me saying "You know what would be a good idea..." I act on a few a year, but usually only one makes the cut. The others just stay dormant until I finally get around to doing something about them. Why is that?

Well for starters, I think we often find ourselves not doing something because we don't see the end result clearly enough. So we don't have a vision to help us push through the pain or hard work of getting there. It is not until we see the goal and the clear results of that goal that we will actually take some action.

For instance, many of us wedding professionals give up our weekends because it is part of our job, as well as the fact that we love what we do and that we are compensated pretty well for it. To us, the repercussions of not being there for our loved ones and friends on the weekends is worth the reward of how we feel when we work. As well as the money!

For self-employed people, in general, the risk of running their own business is what makes the end result worth it. They know what is on the other side of their hard work. And they also know that the going back to work for someone else is just not acceptable.

But then there are a whole other group of people that think the exact opposite. The reward of being self-employed and the freedoms that come with it, just aren't a good enough motivations for them. So they choose to stay in the working world. The potential repercussion of failure and dealing with all of the uncertainty of self-employment just isn't worth it.

I think it is also interesting that one person can have different feelings on two different concepts, but yet be so entrenched in one of those thoughts that you would think they would always feel the same way no matter what the situation. Take, for example,

the self-employed business owner who has taken such a big risk to go into business but still does the same thing, every day, day in and day out, because he doesn't want things to be "too risky" or even a little different. Seems very ironic, doesn't it?

Or take the person who doesn't want to start their own business because it is "too risky" but never settles down on one job and is constantly changing their mind and trying different things (i.e., taking risks). Even more ironic, huh?

So if we can't pin it on the person or personality, what can we determine is the cause? It's easy: It's the goal. If the goal is not clear enough, not concise enough, we won't be able to see through the risk or potential repercussions of doing it. If the idea of adding a new stream of revenue to your company doesn't give you a big enough reward to get you off the couch and away from the TV, you are simply not going to do it.

The goal has to be clear. And when that happens, the reward becomes very real. And when the reward becomes real, the risks and repercussions go by the wayside and you turn into a machine that only accepts success. Failure is not in the forecast.

I find myself always trying to figure out the end result and what it will bring me. If I don't like what I am envisioning, I don't move forward with it. But when I can start to really picture myself enjoying this new project, it is amazing how much I will battle for it! (Maybe sometimes a little too much.)

So, what great ideas do you have? And what actual goals will you set so that your vision will become reality? **MB**

*Jason Weldon is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.*





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